CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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FINAL RECORD OF THE SEVEN HUNDRED AND NINETY-SECOND PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 14 May 1998, at 10.30 a.m.

President: Mr. Al-Hussami (Syrian Arab Republic)

GE.98-61565 (E)

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): I declare open the 792nd plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

First of all I would like to extend a warm welcome to the new colleagues who have joined us as representatives of their countries to the Conference on Disarmament - Ambassador Muratsungar of Turkey, Ambassador Man-Soon Chang of the Republic of Korea and Ambassador Vasily Sidorov of the Russian Federation.

On my list of speakers for today, I have the representatives of Pakistan, Austria, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, Germany, Australia, Denmark, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, Ukraine, New Zealand, India, the United States of America, Norway, Brazil, Sweden, Belgium, Spain, Hungary, the Russian Federation, China, Canada, South Africa and Ireland, as well as Bangladesh, Turkey, Italy, Greece, Iran and Venezuela. Once we have reached the end of the list of speakers I intend to proceed to the appointment of officers to fill the posts established in decision CD/1501 adopted by the Conference on 26 March 1998.

I now invite the representative of Pakistan, Ambassador Akram, to take the floor.

Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan): As we open this spring session of the Conference on Disarmament, it is my pleasant duty to extend a warm welcome to our new colleagues from Turkey, the Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation.

This spring session of the Conference on Disarmament opens at a defining moment for the post-cold-war world security order. It is also a moment of destiny for the 140 million people of Pakistan.

Since its independence, our nation has confronted the endemic hostility of our neighbour, India. We have thrice been subjected to aggression by this country, which dismembered our State in 1971, and is even now engaged in an eight-year brutal war to suppress the right of self-determination of the people of occupied Jammu and Kashmir. This country has deployed almost the whole of its million-and-a-half-man army, its air force and its navy on our frontiers. This third largest conventional force in the world is being further augmented through the acquisition of advanced arms worth billions of dollars.

Before assuming office, the present Hindu fundamentalist leadership of this country had declared that it would conduct nuclear tests and "induct" nuclear weapons. It had also threatened to conduct attacks on Pakistan across the Line of Control in Kashmir. It has carried out the first of these threats. Nuclear weapons proliferation is now a fact of life in South Asia.

In evaluating the grave environment created by India's three plus two nuclear-weapons tests, and in evolving an equitable and effective response, it is essential to bear in mind the history and context of nuclear proliferation in South Asia. It is essential to be aware of the ambitions of India, and

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the compulsions of Pakistan. It is essential to recall the inertia and the responsibility of certain major Powers for this development which has grave portents for regional and international peace and stability.

India's ambition to acquire nuclear weapons, though often disguised by chronic deceit and hypocrisy, has been no secret. Prime Minister Nehru, while inaugurating the Indian Atomic Energy Commission in 1948, declared that "every country would have to develop and use the latest scientific device for its protection".

India has proceeded systematically to acquire and develop nuclear weapons. It acquired a research reactor and other nuclear facilities outside safeguards in the 1960s. It refused to sign the NPT in 1968. It insisted on the legitimacy of "peaceful nuclear explosions". Then, India diverted nuclear fuel from its "civilian" programme to explode a so-called "peaceful" nuclear device in May 1974. Since then, the scope of its unsafeguarded nuclear facilities and fissile material stocks have expanded exponentially.

Nuclear weapons development has been accompanied by the development of nuclear delivery systems, especially ballistic missiles. This was done initially under the cover of a civilian space programme, pursued with the cooperation of several advanced countries. The short-range "Prithvi" missile was tested 20 times. Four to five of these missiles are being serially produced every month. The Prithvi's declared targets are Pakistan's strategic facilities and assets and almost all our cities. The intermediate-range Agni has been tested four times. It is likely to be developed soon for deployment, against China and Pakistan.

India has developed its nuclear and missile programmes with the active assistance and cooperation of several industrialized countries. This must be mentioned, not in anger but for the record. Canada supplied India's unsafeguarded Cirrus research reactor, a heavy-water plant, a nuclear fuel complex and two power reactors. The United States provided unsafeguarded heavy water, assistance in the construction of reprocessing facilities and in training dozens of experts in reprocessing. France offered exchange of personnel and special training in plutonium extraction from spent nuclear fuel.

Similarly, India's missile development is not indigenous. India's missile chief visited various United States missile bases and research facilities in 1962 and, on the way back, concluded an agreement with Switzerland for "Project Indigo", an IRBM research programme. In 1963 and 1964, the doyen of the Indian missile programme participated in the development and launch of the United States Scout missile, which has provided a technological basis for the Agni missile. Several Western countries collaborated in the launching of 350 rockets in India's space programme and the Space Launch Vehicle (SLV 3), whose first stage provided the motor for the Agni. Equipment and technologies - the Viking rocket engine, liquid fuel technology, guidance and navigation systems, high-altitude rocket simulation, electronics - were acquired from these Western countries. The Prithvi is based on the Viking and SA-2 technologies. Finally, despite the Missile

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Technology Control Regime (MTCR), India obtained at least one cryogenic engine from Russia, with 80 per cent of the design and technical information already in its hands.

Pakistan's actions in the nuclear and missile fields were taken, at each stage, in response to the escalatory steps taken by India. Pakistan was able to develop the capability for nuclear enrichment and in missile research and development, notwithstanding discriminatory embargoes and restrictions. We have the technological and other capabilities now to develop the various aspects of our programmes required to respond to India's past, present or future escalatory steps.

However, Pakistan has never resorted to adventurist or irresponsible actions. Our policies have been marked by restraint. After India's 1974 nuclear test, we did not reciprocate. We did not feel the need to do so if India's nuclear weapons development did not go any further. Similarly, Pakistan exercised unilateral restraint in the production of highly enriched uranium despite our concerns regarding India's larger plutonium stockpile. Pakistan has held back so far from deploying its missiles. In response to India's 24 missile tests, Pakistan has conducted only one missile flight test so far.

Despite the fact that every escalatory step on the nuclear proliferation ladder was initiated by India, it is Pakistan which has been consistently subjected to a series of discriminatory penalties, sanctions and restraints designed to prevent us from acquiring the capability to respond to the Indian escalation.

After India's 1974 nuclear explosion, the same country which had provided India with an unsafeguarded research reactor reneged on its contracts to provide Pakistan with safeguarded fuel for our Karachi power reactor, halted shipment of a fuel fabrication plant and terminated all civilian and safeguarded nuclear cooperation with Pakistan. In 1976, the United States Congress passed the so-called Symington Amendment, which penalized acquisition of enrichment and reprocessing capabilities - but only after 1976, thus effectively exempting India but not Pakistan. In 1979, United States economic assistance to Pakistan was terminated for contracting to purchase a reprocessing plant from France. Soon, that country was also obliged to renege on its contract to supply this safeguarded reprocessing plant to Pakistan. But it was not halted from providing India with a vital shearing machine for its unsafeguarded reprocessing facility. In 1980, the United States decided to ship 38 tons of enriched uranium to India. In 1985, France took up the supply of enriched uranium to India. Discrimination against Pakistan was further compounded by the specific legislation aimed against Pakistan, especially the so-called Pressler Amendment, which required the United States President to annually certify that Pakistan - but not India - did not possess a nuclear device.

Such discrimination against Pakistan was all the more unjustified because our preference, at every step of India's push towards proliferation, was to press for political solutions and mutual restraint.

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The initiatives taken by Pakistan to arrest nuclear proliferation in South Asia are a matter of historical record. Even after India's 1974 nuclear explosion, Pakistan proposed: first, a joint Indo-Pakistan declaration renouncing the acquisition or manufacture of nuclear weapons, in 1978; second, mutual inspections by India and Pakistan of each other's nuclear facilities, in 1979; third, simultaneous adherence to the NPT by India and Pakistan, in 1979; fourth, simultaneous acceptance of full-scope IAEA safeguards, in 1979; fifth, a bilateral or regional nuclear-test-ban treaty, in 1987; and sixth, a South Asia zero-missile zone in 1994.

Pakistan also suggested various modalities to advance the goal of non-proliferation in South Asia: bilateral talks, five-nation talks, a multilateral conference. We fully supported initiatives by the United States, first for five-nation talks and later for nine-nation consultations regarding non-proliferation and security in South Asia. While India predictably opposed all these initiatives, what was most disappointing for Pakistan is the alacrity with which these initiatives were jettisoned by their author in the face of India's obdurate and bellicose rejection. Such supine responses are at least consistent. They are all too evident even today. After all, India's 1974 test was accepted as a "peaceful" nuclear explosion by some. And, when India threatened to veto the CTBT in this Conference, it was told in high-level letters that it need not adhere to the Treaty so long as it did not block the Treaty's transmission to the General Assembly. The Ambassador of a great Power in New Delhi went further and assured that even an Indian veto of the CTBT would have no impact on bilateral relations. He was proved right by events.

This track record does not inspire any confidence that the new endeavours which are now urged are more sincere or will be more effective.

The events of the past few months have vividly confirmed our conviction that it is Pakistan and not India which is the real target of the non-proliferation crusaders. The missile tests conducted by India over the past months evoked no concern or comment; even sanctions were loudly threatened against Pakistan and China. When the BJP-led Government declared its aim of inducting nuclear weapons and conducting nuclear tests, no official concern was expressed, despite the warning conveyed in the letters sent by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to the leaders of the major Powers. Similarly, the concern expressed by Pakistan's Foreign Minister in this Conference on 19 March this year evoked no response. Instead, the high visiting envoys of the sole super-Power sang paeans of praise - even in Islamabad - for the "restraint and responsibility" of the new Indian Government. We are now witness to this "restraint and responsibility"!

Such apparent gullibility did not greatly impress the Pakistani leadership. We were hardly amused when, soon after these visits, MTCR sanctions were instituted against a Pakistan Government entity. Meanwhile, no sanctions were considered for India's development of submarine-based missiles.

We also saw other curious and disturbing signals. The Indian Defence Minister, notwithstanding the well-known improvement in Sino-Indian relations,

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suddenly declared that China, rather than Pakistan, was the "number one threat" to India's security. He falsely asserted that China has deployed missiles in Tibet aimed at India.

Evidently, in the Indian view, it was felt that its nuclear tests would be more palatable if they were seen as serving the goal of "containing" China. Reported moves at the recently concluded NPT PrepCom meeting to accommodate India's concerns on the FMCT, full-scope safeguards, etc. have added fuel to speculation about new deals and alignments.

Conspiracy theories have gained further credence due to the alleged absence of advance warning about the Indian nuclear tests. We have been repeatedly told of the awesome capabilities of the national technical means (NTMs) of one Power. Indeed, sanctions have been (wrongly) imposed on Pakistan (and China) on the basis of "evidence" said to have been acquired through such NTMs. In December 1995, these NTMs detected Indian preparations for a test, enabling the international community to take measures to pre-empt these tests. Why was it different now? Was this really an intelligence failure?

A report circulated in Washington by an anti-Indian "political action group" dated 7 May - i.e. four days before the 11 May tests - stated that "in the meantime preparations for an Indian nuclear test have been further confirmed by our sources in India (who so far have never been wrong, having millions of pairs of eyes and ears fixed to the ground), who report all kinds of feverish night-time activities, in the vicinity of Pokharan in Rajasthan State 60 miles from the Pakistan border. The question is: will the United States allow the fundamentalist Hindu fascists in Delhi to circumvent United States non-proliferation laws? Only time will tell."

Well, the Hindu fundamentalists have acted. Now, unequal restraint is again urged on Pakistan.

The press statement issued by India on 11 May that "it would be prepared to consider being an adherent to some of the undertakings in the CTBT" dependent on "a number of reciprocal activities", and that "it would be happy to participate in FMCT negotiations", indicates a game plan to ease the cost of the nuclear tests. In India's eyes the CTBT seems to have shed its inequity overnight. Forgetting its "not now, not later" declaration, India appears to have given up its call for "nuclear disarmament within a time-bound framework". It was after all, only a ploy. All of us suspected as much.

Interestingly, the demands being made now by some of the major Powers appear to match the Indian "offers". Is this coincidence?

India has, however, asked for a price - undefined "reciprocal activities" - for its acceptance of the CTBT. Is this a reference to India's desire for technology to carry out subcritical nuclear tests? Or is this a reference to its demand for a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council? Or, even more ambitiously, is this a demand by India to be formally acknowledged as a nuclear-weapon State? Regrettably, at least

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two nuclear Powers have expressed an interest in eliciting what price India may be asking for adherence to the CTBT. Is it merely a coincidence that the same two Powers have recently expressed an interest in exploring deals for civil nuclear cooperation with India?

For Pakistan, the series of nuclear-weapon tests conducted by India on 11 and 13 May have significantly altered the strategic and security equation in our region. As the Indian press statement itself has stated:

> "These tests have established that India has proven capability for a weaponized nuclear programme. They also provide a valuable database which is useful in the design of nuclear weapons of different yields for different applications and for different delivery systems. Further, they are expected to carry Indian scientists towards a sound computer simulation capability which may be supported by subcritical experiments, if considered necessary."

Furthermore, as Mr. Joshi, the Indian Minister for Science and Technology, is quoted as saying on 12 May:

> "Indian scientists will put a nuclear warhead on missiles as soon as the situation requires. India has not closed its option to conduct more tests if and when necessary. In the meanwhile work on the Agni Phase II has started in earnest."

What Pakistan confronts today is not merely a nuclear-capable State. We face a nuclear-weaponized Power. It is strange that senior officials of a major nuclear Power continue to argue, unconvincingly, that India has not "weaponized" yet. We wonder if they would be convinced of this if India actually delivers a nuclear weapon against one of its neighbours?

In the new strategic environment, it is extremely disingenuous for anyone to call on Pakistan to exercise restraint, or to sign the CTBT or agree to FMCT negotiations. These calls are, of course, consistent with the discrimination to which Pakistan has been historically subjected.

The Government of Pakistan has adopted an important principle that we will accept obligations and commitments in the field of nuclear non-proliferation only if these are equitable and non-discriminatory. We will not accept unilateral obligations or commitments. We will not accept commitments which would permanently jeopardize the ability of Pakistan to deter the nuclear and conventional threats which India poses to our security.

Pakistan has consistently acted as a responsible member of the international community. We have not resorted to adventurism and provocation. But Pakistan will not allow itself to be subjected to any international conspiracy to compromise its security. We will not endorse any scheme which fosters or accepts India's nuclear or political hegemony in our region. The Indian tests are a direct and most serious challenge to Pakistan's security. It is Pakistan alone which will decide on and take the measures required to guarantee our security. The people of Pakistan, after decades of

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discrimination, have a right to insist that their nation's security and independence be fully respected by all the members of the international community.

In his statement before the Pakistan Senate yesterday, my Foreign Minister stated:

> "The news of the carrying out of two further nuclear tests today by India corroborates our assessment and provides further confirmation, if any were needed, about India's consistent pattern of irresponsible behaviour.
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> "The blind pursuit of intrinsic and inherent hegemonic impulses, reflected too often in Indian behaviour and ignored largely by the international community, despite Pakistan's repeated efforts to draw attention to them, has definitely encouraged and emboldened India to throw all caution to the winds.
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> "The invoking of mandatory sanctions under United States laws against India hardly constitutes an effective response to Indian provocative actions or compensates for errors of judgement, which have seriously disrupted the regional strategic balance.
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> "India is now admittedly testing the whole range of nuclear weaponry, including battlefield/tactical nuclear weapons which are Pakistan-specific.
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> "Indian actions, which pose an immediate and grave threat to Pakistan's security, will not go unanswered.
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> "Pakistan once again reiterates that responsibility for consequences that will inevitably ensue would lie squarely with India and those who have colluded and acquiesced in the weaponization of India's nuclear programme."

Mr. KREID (Austria): I am taking the floor to express my Government's regret at the underground nuclear tests conducted by India on 11 and 13 May. We are filled with a deep sense of frustration at these events, which come at a time when there was good reason to think we were about to rid our globe once and for all of nuclear test explosions. It is thus a major setback we are faced with. True enough, the Government of India has always kept this option open. It had given a clear signal by staying away from the NPT and by not only staying away from the CTBT but preventing the conclusion of negotiations in the CD.

In contrast, other States have found it possible to relinquish their nuclear weapons programmes. We highly commend the far-sightedness of their decision makers. These countries have not lost prestige or influence; on the contrary, their status has been enhanced. The Indian Government has not felt it possible to follow these examples. It has, instead, decided that its security cannot be safeguarded without a demonstrated nuclear capability. We

(Mr. Kreid, Austria)

think it is deplorable that the Indian Government should have come to this conclusion because we do not think that security can be achieved by playing the nuclear card. On the contrary, we are afraid that insecurity will be increased.

In the light of the persistent impasse in the CD and in the light of the disappointing result of the second NPT PrepCom, which just came to an end here in Geneva last week, we cannot affirm that there exists a convincing move towards nuclear disarmament on a multilateral level. But getting bogged down for a while does not mean that we are actually slipping backwards, thus losing ground which had been arduously gained in years of bilateral and multilateral efforts.

The news from India is bad news precisely because it is a step backwards, an act which might well trigger responses from other countries and thus set in motion an ominous process of regional escalation. We hope this will not be the case, and appeal to other Governments not to let themselves be induced to a course of action which can only exacerbate the situation. We hope that India, having satisfied itself of its nuclear capabilities, will consider its adhesion to the CTBT with no strings attached. The wording contained in a press statement circulated by the Permanent Mission of India to Geneva and dated 11 May is not reassuring. To link an adhesion to the CTBT to the requirement of "a number of reciprocal activities" may well be self-defeating. Much as we would like to derive encouragement from the announcement, we cannot help but doubt the true intentions of the Indian Government in this context.

On the other hand, we welcome the announcement contained in the same press statement according to which India is ready to participate in negotiations on an FMCT in the Conference on Disarmament. The Indian delegation should thus be in a position to support the draft decision on the re-establishment of an ad hoc committee to negotiate a cut-off treaty submitted by my delegation on 3 February 1998 (CD/1492). We are firmly convinced that the only chance of making progress in the nuclear field is the step-by-step or incremental approach. The FMCT is such a step. It will help to improve the international security environment and thus open up new perspectives for more daring measures which are not within our reach today.

Mr. HAYASHI (Japan): Mr. President, it is a pleasure for my delegation to return to the CD and to continue to work towards our common goal of disarmament. Your wisdom, experience and authority will be invaluable to us all. I can assure you of the fullest cooperation of my delegation, and I wish you a successful tenure as we jointly pursue our important work. I would like to extend my warm welcome to the new Ambassadors who have joined us recently.

Today I have asked for the floor firstly to inform the Conference of the statement made in Tokyo by the Chief Cabinet Secretary, the official spokesman of the Government of Japan, concerning the nuclear tests conducted by India on 11 May 1998. I quote:

(Mr. Hayashi, Japan)

"In the afternoon of 11 May 1998, Indian Prime Minister Mr. Atal Bihari Vajpayee announced that India conducted underground nuclear testing. It is extremely regrettable that India conducted such testing, resisting the global trend to ban nuclear testing, while the international community, including Japan, has repeatedly requested the new Indian Administration for maximum self-restraint on nuclear policies. Japan strongly urges the Indian Government to stop its development of nuclear weapons immediately. Further, Japan calls on the countries concerned in the region for self-restraint in order not to let the Indian nuclear testing harm the stability of the region."

India conducted, in spite of earnest appeals from every corner of the globe, two more nuclear tests on 13 May. These actions run directly counter to the global aims of the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons and the ban on nuclear testing. It is said that these explosions completed a series of tests, but the damage caused by these tests by India and their ultimate effects on the goals of international disarmament are immeasurable.

Words are not sufficient to express the shock of the Japanese Government as well as that of the Japanese people, who collectively have been making earnest efforts towards the nuclear-test ban and the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons.

The Japanese people's feelings and opposition to the nuclear tests are reflected in the resolution adopted by the Upper House of the Japanese Diet on 13 May. The resolution states, in short, that the entire country of Japan, being the only country in the world to have suffered nuclear devastation, profoundly regrets the nuclear tests and strongly appeals to the Indian Government to halt immediately its nuclear weapons programme.

My delegation finds the recent nuclear tests by India particularly and extremely regrettable because they were conducted in the face of the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty adopted in 1996, and against the will of the international community, whose goal is to attain global nuclear non-proliferation. While acknowledging that India is a signatory to neither the CTBT nor the NPT, the global nuclear test ban and the NPT regime are accepted as an important international norm through the explicit commitments by and practices of the overwhelming majority of the international community. The underground explosions in the desert have single-handedly dashed the hope that nuclear testing had, in fact, ended for ever. The earnest and sometimes painstaking efforts of the international community that were aimed at a world free of nuclear weapons have also been challenged.

The Indian statement issued after the testing claimed that "These tests provide reassurance to the people of India that their national security interests are paramount and will be promoted and protected". Japan is convinced that such tests, in the final reckoning, will adversely affect stability in the region, resulting in the weakening rather than the strengthening of India's national security. It is sincerely hoped that other countries in the region - or any other place in the world for that matter - will not follow India's example but, instead, will exercise the utmost

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self-restraint in the face of the unsolicited crisis so that the nuclear testing will neither result in a vicious circle of further regional instability in general nor in the revival of a nuclear arms race in particular.

Having made Japan's unequivocal opposition against nuclear testing clear, I would like to emphasize that the Indian nuclear tests should in no way be seen as an impediment to our work in the CD. Instead, we should learn from them and work even harder towards the goal of global nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. In this context, we should reaffirm the utmost importance and necessity of our efforts towards the early entry into force of the CTBT and the early commencement of negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty.

It is my sincerest belief that our efforts in the CD will be redoubled from today, and constructive progress will be made in this session.

Mr. de ICAZA (Mexico) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, my delegation associates itself with the words of welcome you addressed on behalf of all of us to the new ambassadors and representatives of Turkey, the Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation.

On Monday, 11 May, the Government of Mexico issued the following statement:

> "With reference to the announcement by the Government of India of the conduct today of three underground nuclear-weapon tests, the Government of Mexico condemns and deplores these acts, which are not conducive to the climate necessary to the achievement of a nuclear-weapon-free world, exacerbate regional tensions and are inconsistent with the current state of international detente.
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> "Mexico considers that, as has repeatedly been proposed in the United Nations, which has adopted a variety of resolutions on the matter, nuclear-weapon tests must end for all time in order to avoid unleashing a new nuclear arms race. The cessation of nuclear-weapon tests is essential for international peace and security.
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> "Mexico will continue to strive for nuclear disarmament and for effective and progressive measures to ensure the credibility and efficacy of all aspects of the international non-proliferation regime.
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> "This position was stated by Ms. Rosario Green, Minister for Foreign Affairs, during the meeting of the Group of Fifteen currently being held in Cairo."

I have asked for the statement I have just read out to be circulated as a Conference document.

Yesterday, in Panama City, the Rio Group issued the following communiqué:

(Mr. de Icaza, Mexico)

"The countries of the Permanent Mechanism for Consultation and Concerted Political Action (Rio Group) deplore the making of nuclear tests in any part of the world, particularly the tests carried out on 11 and 13 May in Rajasthan, India, and reiterate their concern at the negative effects of such tests on international peace, the environment and human health, which all nations are obliged to protect and preserve.

"The countries of the Rio Group consider that the international community must take urgent steps to obtain the immediate opening of negotiations on nuclear disarmament with a view to establishing effective measures that will make possible the elimination of nuclear weapons within the foreseeable future and thereby the creation of a real and comprehensive nuclear non-proliferation regime that is universal, genuine and non-discriminatory.

"The countries of the Rio Group therefore call upon the Government of India to give a definitive undertaking to the international community to cancel all types of nuclear test."

I would also ask for the Rio Group statement to be circulated as a Conference document.

At the end of the first part of our present session, on 26 March, we agreed on a programme of work the implementation of which requires intensified consultations under the authority of the President in order to reach a consensus on how to address the question of nuclear disarmament which, as we said at that time, constitutes our first priority. We must fulfil our agreement. We reiterate our proposal for the establishment without delay of an ad hoc committee for the immediate commencement of concrete negotiations under agenda item 1, "Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament".

Mr. MAJOOR (Netherlands): As this is the first time my delegation takes the floor under your presidency, Sir, let me congratulate you and assure you of the full support of the Netherlands for your endeavours in steering the Conference to its substantive work and concrete results. You already gave ample proof of your outstanding abilities by presiding over the conclusion of the Conference's programme of work. Our admiration and thanks also go to your predecessors, Ambassador Norberg of Sweden and Ambassador Hofer of Switzerland, for laying the foundations for that decision.

It was with deep concern and dismay that my Government learned about the five nuclear test explosions carried out by India this week. Deep concern because this action risks to have a profound effect not only on peace and stability in the region, but also on global efforts aimed at progressive nuclear arms control and disarmament. Dismay because, knowing well the position of India vis-à-vis the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), the Netherlands thought it unlikely that India would resort to such an act of defiance against the ever stronger international norms related to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and the prohibition of nuclear testing. The Netherlands has carefully considered

(Mr. Majoor, Netherlands)

how to react to this development. As a first step, the Netherlands Government has decided to freeze all direct Government-to-Government macroeconomic aid to India. Furthermore, arms export licences will no longer be issued. Possible further steps will be discussed in the framework of the European Union.

During the final stage of the CTBT negotiations, India indicated that it could not join that treaty because it was of the opinion that the CTBT did not contribute sufficiently to nuclear disarmament and, consequently, maintained the nuclear status quo. India itself has now changed that status quo, not by following the example set by other countries in recent years to step away from the nuclear brink, but by confirming its status as a nuclear proliferator. That step is most regrettable and is not justified by developments in the region and worldwide. In general, India's relations with its neighbours seemed not as strained as at other points in time. Options for constructively working together with the international community towards creating an environment conducive to nuclear disarmament, in the Conference on Disarmament and elsewhere, still seemed viable.

Nuclear testing by India is not only a rejection of the CTBT as such, but also of the process supported by the international community of agreeing to pragmatic steps on the road to a world free of nuclear weapons on the basis of the NPT and the 1995 "Principles and objectives". The Test-Ban Treaty is one such step; a fissile material cut-off treaty would be another. But at the same time, the international community should set an example by reaffirming its own commitment to nuclear disarmament - nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States alike. The Netherlands, for one, remains prepared to contribute actively to this process.

Nuclear testing by India causes grave concern especially in the region; however, my Government expresses the hope that South Asia will not become entangled in a dangerous arms race - nuclear or conventional. In particular, it calls upon Pakistan to show restraint and not to follow the Indian example. Rather, it should join the rest of the world community in the reaffirmation of its efforts to enhance international peace and security by contributing in good faith to accepted steps towards the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. It is my sincere hope that during this session the Conference can start making substantial contributions towards that common goal. Referring to the proposal in the Indian statement in relation to its nuclear testing, we hope that common ground can still be found to engage in negotiations on a cut-off treaty. We look forward to early and tangible signals in this regard.

Mr. SEIBERT (Germany): Like previous speakers, my delegation warmly welcomes our new colleagues from Turkey, the Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation. We are looking forward to working with them.

My delegation deeply regrets the deplorable circumstances in which we are starting this spring session. The German Government condemns the Indian nuclear tests of 11 and 13 May 1998. Federal Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel has stated publicly that they represent a slap in the face for all of the 149 States which have signed the Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty. Together with our partners in the European Union, we deplore India's decision to abandon its

(Mr. Seibert, Germany)

policy of nuclear restraint and to further aggravate the security situation in the region with five nuclear test explosions. The efforts of the international community to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons have been seriously damaged at a time when the member States of the Non-Proliferation Treaty had just finished the second preparatory meeting for the Review Conference to be held in the year 2000. India has thus flagrantly defied the efforts of the international community to effectively combat the further proliferation of nuclear weapons.

The German Government calls upon the Indian Government to live up to its great responsibility for peace and stability in the region and to do everything in its power to support the international nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament efforts. The Non-Proliferation Treaty must be applied universally. India must not stay away from it for ever. We appeal to India to sign the Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty now so that nuclear tests will become a thing of the past once and for all. We call upon India to enter into a concrete security dialogue with its neighbours in order to avert the possible threat of a nuclear arms race in the region. We urgently appeal to India's neighbours, for their part, to exercise the utmost restraint. Having just listened to the statement by the distinguished Ambassador of Pakistan, we strongly hope that Pakistan will continue its policy of restraint he mentioned in his statement and will not follow India's example.

Recent events have shown how important the efforts aimed at further substantial steps in the direction of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation are. The opening of negotiations at this Conference on a comprehensive ban on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices on the basis of the mandate adopted in 1995 would be of particular significance in this context. We call upon all member States to do all they can to support the presidency's consultations so that these issues can soon be dealt with in the Conference on Disarmament. India should no longer block the commencement of these negotiations but should rather, as it has announced, now actively participate in negotiations for the conclusion of a fissile material cut-off treaty in the Conference on Disarmament.

Mr. CAMPBELL (Australia): Mr. President, let me first warmly welcome your assumption of the presidency and assure you, as I assure my colleagues, including those recently arrived, of my delegation's willingness to work cooperatively will all in this Conference to achieve our common objectives.

Australia's resolute opposition to any nuclear testing by any State anywhere is well known. It is a position of longstanding and is consistent with our policies and initiatives in the field of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament.

Following the conduct by India of three nuclear tests on 11 May, Australia took immediate and decisive action. We let the Indian Government know in no uncertain terms of our extreme disappointment at its flagrant defiance of the clearly expressed will of the international community that nuclear testing must cease for ever. Australia's Prime Minister issued a

(Mr. Campbell, Australia)

strong statement, which I would like to read into the record, making clear the seriousness with which we view the Indian nuclear tests. Our Foreign Minister recalled our High Commissioner in New Delhi for consultations, and called in the Indian High Commissioner in Canberra to make clear the strength of Australian feeling.

None of this, nor similar protests by the international community, dissuaded India from conducting two further nuclear tests reported yesterday.

Coming so soon after its earlier tests and in the face of near-universal condemnation, we can only conclude that this is the act of a Government that has the utmost disregard for accepted international norms of behaviour.

India's actions are a slap in the face to the overwhelming majority of the international community determined to work towards the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world. India's nuclear tests make a mockery of its claimed desire to remove for ever the threat of nuclear war.

India's actions can only exacerbate an already tense situation in its immediate region, and have potentially serious implications for global security. Australia calls on India's neighbours to exercise the highest degree of restraint in the face of this provocation.

Australia also calls on India to join the international nuclear non-proliferation regime and urges India to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty without delay, without condition.

It is deeply disappointing that India has chosen a course of action which casts such a major shadow on Australia's otherwise positive relationship with that country. But, in the light of the ill-judged actions of India, Australia has decided to implement the following steps, effective immediately: suspension of bilateral defence relations, suspension of non-humanitarian aid and suspension of ministerial and senior official visits.

Australia has taken this action both to register our concern to the Indian Government and to send a message to other nations that might be considering the testing or development of nuclear weapons about the consequences of any such action.

I would like now to read briefly the statement by the Honourable John Howard, Prime Minister of Australia. It reads:

> "India's action in conducting three underground nuclear tests is an ill-judged step which could have most damaging consequences for security in South Asia and globally.
>
> "Australia has a direct security interest in preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The Indian tests are in flagrant defiance of the international community's strong support for nuclear non-proliferation and opposition to nuclear testing. To date,

(Mr. Campbell, Australia)

186 countries are party to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and 149 countries have signed the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty.

"India's neighbours will naturally be concerned about the tests, but a nuclear arms race is not the way to address the issue of maintaining stability in South Asia. The Government urges them not to respond in ways which would further destabilize security in the region.

"The Foreign Minister has called in the Indian High Commissioner today to convey our condemnation of the tests in the strongest possible terms. The same message will be registered by our High Commission in New Delhi.

"The Government is recalling our High Commissioner from New Delhi for consultations. Further action will be decided in light of those consultations and discussions with other countries which share our concern."

Mr. NIERULF (Denmark): Mr. President, as this is the first time my delegation takes the floor under your presidency, I would like first of all to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency.

Denmark has learned with great worry and deep concern about the five underground nuclear tests which India conducted on 11 May and 13 May, its first such tests since 1974.

With this development India has clearly taken a step in the wrong direction.

The five nuclear tests are of great risk to stability and security in South Asia and could lead to counter reactions in the region. Such a development would be of great concern to Denmark.

By conducting nuclear tests India has ignored the advice of the international community to join the Non-Proliferation Treaty as well as the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty.

Since 1996, when the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty was adopted and supported by an overwhelming majority of United Nations Member States, no nuclear testing has taken place. As noted by the United Nations Secretary-General, the present testing by the Government of India is therefore inconsistent with the pattern which has been firmly endorsed by the international community.

Through its actions India also takes on itself a heavy responsibility for endangering the existing disarmament agreements in the nuclear field, in direct contradiction to India's declared intention of furthering nuclear disarmament.

(Mr. Kierulf, Denmark)

As we have informed the Government of India, India's decision to ignore the advice of the international community and conduct nuclear tests will have serious consequences for Denmark's development aid to India.

Denmark is following the situation in South Asia with great concern and, in conjunction with the appeals made by the international community over the past days, we strongly urge India to put a stop to its nuclear ambitions and concentrate its efforts on securing the economic development urgently needed in order to improve living conditions for the many poor people in the Indian society.

Again, we call upon India to join the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty with a view to strengthening these regimes and rebuilding confidence in the region.

Mr. SOUTAR (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland): Mr. President, may I first of all associate myself with your welcome to our newly arrived colleagues, the ambassadors of Turkey, the Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation?

I would like to take the opportunity to draw attention to the European Union presidency's statement on the issue of Indian nuclear testing, issued on 11 May by Mr. Derek Fatchett, Minister of State at the Foreign Office. This read as follows:

> "The Presidency expresses its dismay at the news of the Indian nuclear test.
>
> "The European Union is fully committed to the implementation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty, which seeks to discourage the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The European Union has a strong interest in the peace and stability of South Asia and is concerned about the risk of nuclear and missile proliferation.
>
> "The Presidency is ensuring that the implications of this test are discussed by the member States at the Political Committee on 12 May."

I might add, with reference to the last point, that the issue will again be taken up by the European Union.

In addition, I would wish to underline my delegation's firm support for the calls, in the statements we have heard earlier, for India's neighbours to exercise restraint, and for India herself immediately to cease and to renounce any further testing; to sign and ratify the CTBT immediately and without conditions; to participate in negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty; and to participate fully in international efforts to stop the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Mr. HOFER (Switzerland) (translated from French): Mr. President, this is the first time that my delegation has had the privilege of taking the floor

(Mr. Hofer, Switzerland)

under your presidency. Allow me to express my satisfaction at continuing the close cooperation which has developed with you. I particularly welcome the success achieved under your presidency at the end of March. I would like to assure you of the full support of the Swiss delegation as you carry out your tasks. I would also like to extend a welcome to our colleagues who are taking part in a meeting of the Conference for the first time - the ambassadors of the Russian Federation, the Republic of Korea and Turkey.

I am taking the floor today to tell you that the Swiss authorities learnt with deep regret that on 11 and 13 May India carried out several underground nuclear tests in the Rajasthan desert. Those explosions put an end to a nuclear testing moratorium which had been observed by India since its first nuclear test in May 1974, and by all the nuclear-weapon States since the signing of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) in September 1996.

Although this new series of tests violates no international treaty to which India is a party, it does run counter to the efforts of the international community to prevent nuclear proliferation. In particular, these tests may lead us to fear other preparations in the military nuclear domain and portend a dangerous arms race in the region. And, finally, the resumption of nuclear testing by India endangers the implementation of the CTBT which has now been signed by 149 States.

In order to avoid serious consequences which these nuclear tests might have for regional and international stability, Switzerland calls upon the Indian authorities to refrain from further nuclear testing in any form and to accede to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the NPT, as well as the CTBT. Switzerland also hopes that the States of South Asia will not yield to the temptation of a nuclear arms race and that they will avoid taking any action which might endanger peace and security in the region.

It is true that the Indian explosions put back on the table the question of progress in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. They also raise the issue of inequality in the world nuclear order and the profound concern of the non-nuclear-weapon States at the slow progress in the actual implementation of the disarmament promises made under article VI of the NPT. The meagre results of the second session of the Preparatory Committee for the NPT Review Conference in the year 2000, which came to an end here last Friday, again highlighted this problem.

We continue to feel that the Conference on Disarmament is the ideal body to open negotiations in certain fields of nuclear disarmament and nuclear arms control, starting with work on a treaty to halt the production of fissile material for military purposes. It is noteworthy that the President of the Conference on Disarmament managed, at the end of March, to identify the cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament as a subject of the highest priority and that as a consequence the President, with the support of his predecessor and his successor, is now consulting with members on ways and means of making progress on this item on the agenda. The recent Indian explosions should prompt us to redouble our efforts and proceed to practical actions.

Mr. MAIMESKUL (Ukraine): Mr. President, it gives me great pleasure to congratulate you warmly on your assumption of the honourable and responsible duties of CD President. Your skills and perseverance enabled our multilateral forum at the end of the first part of this annual session to adopt a decision on the programme of work and we pledge our full support and cooperation to your efforts to steer our Conference to start its substantive work this year.

I have taken the floor at this plenary to bring to your attention the reaction of my country to the nuclear explosion tests carried out by India this week. I would prefer to speak about positive developments in arms control and disarmament and dwell, for example, upon the latest decision of my Government to eliminate 25 Tupolev-95 heavy bombers (called "Bears") and 19 Tupolev-160 heavy bombers (called "Blackjacks") designed to carry long-range nuclear air-launched cruise missiles, but regrettably the issue of nuclear testing, which was supposed to be resolved at the end of 1996, has again drawn the attention of the international community. Therefore, someone might say that the CD had a bit hastily excluded the item "Comprehensive nuclear test ban" from its agenda.

Having said this, I would now like to read the statement of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine of 12 May 1998.

> "On 11 May 1998 India carried out three underground nuclear tests.
>
> "This event caused great concern in Ukraine, for it violates the moratorium on nuclear tests which has been observed by the international community for the last few years.
>
> "Our country, its population having suffered from the horrible consequences of radioactive contamination, proceeds from the premise that no defence or security concerns, or the national interests of any country in the world can justify the resumption of nuclear explosion testing.
>
> "Ukraine, which voluntarily eliminated the third largest nuclear arsenal in the world and committed itself not to carry out nuclear testing, condemns this step taken by India which endangers existing international agreements on nuclear weapon non-proliferation.
>
> "Ukraine calls upon the Government of India and other countries to cooperate more actively in the peaceful use of nuclear energy and to redouble their efforts to achieve the complete elimination of nuclear weapons."

Mr. PEARSON (New Zealand): I am taking the floor to explain that New Zealand deplores India's decision to conduct two series of nuclear tests. We condemn these tests just as we have condemned all nuclear testing in the past.

Despite its refusal to join the Non-Proliferation Treaty or to sign the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty, India has always professed that it is committed

(Mr. Pearson, New Zealand)

to nuclear disarmament. The New Zealand Government, at the highest levels, is surprised and very disappointed that India has not lived up to this ideal.

The New Zealand Government has withdrawn its High Commissioner in New Delhi for consultations in Wellington on India's most regrettable action. We are considering other measures.

My Prime Minister, the Hon. Jenny Shipley, and the New Zealand Foreign Minister and Minister for Disarmament, the Rt. Hon. Don McKinnon, have made it absolutely clear to the Indian authorities in Wellington and in New Delhi that New Zealand objects most strongly to the testing.

We urge other countries in the region to remain calm and to continue to exercise the restraint they have so far shown in responding to these events. It is imperative that there should be no further steps which might, in any way, weaken the international norm against nuclear testing.

We regard the Indian nuclear tests as being a serious setback for nuclear non-proliferation and for the global effort to eliminate nuclear weapons.

We join the many calls of other concerned countries urging India to make the commitment not to conduct any further tests. We also call on India to join the Non-Proliferation Treaty and to sign and ratify unconditionally the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty as a matter of urgency.

Mrs. KUNADI (India): Mr. President, my delegation is pleased to see you in the Chair guiding our deliberations with your characteristic skill. I would also like to welcome our new colleagues, Ambassador Sidorov of the Russian Federation, Ambassador Chang of the Republic of Korea and Ambassador Sungar of Turkey. I look forward to working with them.

My delegation has asked for the floor to formally introduce CD document CD/1504 and addendum 1, containing two press statements issued by India on 11 and 13 May respectively.

On 11 May, India successfully conducted three simultaneous underground nuclear tests. These tests were conducted after a voluntary restraint maintained for 24 years. These tests were followed by two more underground nuclear tests carried out on 13 May. In undertaking these tests, India has not violated any international obligations or undertakings. The decision to undertake these tests was taken after due consideration of our national security requirements.

India remains fully committed to the complete elimination of all nuclear weapons. We believe that universal, comprehensive, non-discriminatory and effectively verifiable disarmament agreements offer the best means for approaching the issue of nuclear disarmament, and remain ready to participate in such efforts with other countries.

Mr. SKOGMO (Norway): Mr. President, let me congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the CD and express our support for your work in preparing this session. A warm word of gratitude also to your predecessor for his dedicated effort in helping set the stage for the work of the Conference during this session, and let me also join those who have welcomed the new ambassadors to the Conference.

The international norm established by the conclusion of the NPT in 1968 and further consolidated by the signing of the CTBT in 1996 is a vital contribution to international peace and stability. We all have a responsibility to ensure that efforts to prevent proliferation of nuclear weapons and to reduce their role in international politics are maintained.

India's decision to carry out nuclear tests is a serious setback to international nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament efforts and ends the de facto international moratorium which has existed since the conclusion of the CTBT in 1996.

Norway condemns the nuclear tests conducted by India on 11 and 13 May. We call on India to immediately renounce all nuclear testing and to refrain from any action that could further deteriorate the situation. We urge India to sign and ratify the NPT and the CTBT without delay and without any conditions.

We strongly appeal to other countries in the region to exercise restraint and not to follow the example of India.

Let me add that the Prime Ministers of the five Nordic countries have today issued a joint statement expressing their utmost dismay at India's nuclear tests.

Mr. LAFER (Brazil): The Brazilian delegation has already had occasion to congratulate you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency. I reiterate our willingness to fully cooperate with your endeavours. I also welcome the new ambassadors accredited to the Conference on Disarmament.

Three days ago, on 11 May, the Brazilian Government expressed its consternation with regard to the three nuclear tests conducted by India on that date, and urged that country to adhere to the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty.

Upon learning of further nuclear explosions carried out yesterday, 13 May, the Brazilian Government expressed its deep regret at such course of action, reiterated the call for India to refrain from any new tests, and issued an appeal to all countries of South Asia to exercise maximum restraint.

As a member of the Group of Rio, Brazil fully subscribes to the statement issued on 13 May and read out this morning by Ambassador de Icaza of Mexico. I have, nonetheless, the following few additional remarks.

(Mr. Lafer, Brazil)

Nuclear testing not only runs counter to the long-sought international norm provided by the CTBT, threatening its incipient existence. It may also have serious and unpredictable implications for regional and global security, exacerbating tensions, which may lead to a new arms race, and increasing the risk of losing modest although important international commitments on nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation on the part of possessor States.

No amount of justification can, in our view, legitimize weapons of mass destruction. Nor do we believe that their possession can increase the security of any State. On the contrary, we are convinced that national nuclear arsenals bring new perils to the people they purportedly protect. Brazil cannot condone visions of security, long espoused by nuclear Powers, based on nuclear deterrence, which corresponds to a threat of using indiscriminate violence. As we learn from Gandhi's teachings, lasting peace does not come from violent means: the ends are contained in the means, as the tree is in the seed.

That is why we express the hope that this week's distressing developments will lead to a sober assessment of their implications on the part of all countries. Clear, unambiguous and binding commitments to a phased programme for the complete elimination of nuclear weapons by all nuclear-weapon-capable countries are the only guarantee against nuclear proliferation. In the uncharted waters we now find ourselves in, we should seek guidance in the self-evident truth that nuclear disarmament is the only real and effective remedy for non-proliferation, as many countries, including my own, have repeatedly stressed since the early days of the nuclear age. Now, more than ever, this Conference must no longer be prevented from properly and seriously addressing nuclear disarmament, which, as this week's events underscore, remains the central global political strategic issue of our time.

Mr. NORBERG (Sweden): The Swedish Government condemns the repeated underground nuclear tests carried out by India on 11 and 13 May, in clear defiance of international norms and the strong reactions of the international community.

The Indian nuclear testing is totally unacceptable. It is a serious blow to regional and global security and to international nuclear disarmament efforts and the global non-proliferation regime. It is imperative that India refrain from any action that could further deteriorate the situation.

Sweden underlines the crucial importance of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty for international efforts to avert the danger of nuclear war, to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons and achieve nuclear disarmament. We strongly urge India to reconsider its nuclear policies and to adhere to both treaties without conditions.

The Swedish Government calls on States concerned to exercise the utmost restraint to prevent a nuclear arms race and to safeguard peace and stability in the region.

Mr. MERNIER (Belgium) (translated from French): First of all, Sir, I would like to congratulate you on taking the Chair of our Conference. My delegation wishes to assure you of its trust and support. I would also like to echo the words of welcome extended to our new colleagues from Turkey, the Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation.

It is with regret that I am obliged to take the floor today. But it is impossible for my country not to place on record in this forum its consternation at the nuclear tests carried out over the last few days by India. The European Union has already expressed its views on the subject and naturally my country subscribes to that statement. This will allow me to be brief. The decision of the Indian Government marks an unacceptable break with the international standard in this area. This standard is the CTBT. Created by the Conference on Disarmament, it was awaited for many years as one of the natural and essential complements to the Non-Proliferation Treaty. Violation of it is an anachronism which we cannot but condemn. I would also like to emphasize how much this decision runs counter to the efforts being made by one and all to reduce nuclear arsenals until they have been totally eliminated. These tests endanger security and stability in an entire region, taken together with the simultaneous development of new missiles, they cannot but expose that region to the enhanced danger inherent in any proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Belgium appeals to the Indian Government to give up the military nuclear option and to join the overwhelming majority of States in acceding to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. There is no doubt that such a decision would lead its Pakistani neighbour to do the same. Accession by India and Pakistan to the NPT would be a major contribution to reducing the temperature in the region and would be of benefit to all States there.

I would like to conclude by reaffirming Belgium's attachment to all the treaties and regimes that combat nuclear proliferation, which presents an unacceptable risk from every standpoint and at every level - national, regional or universal.

Mr. MARTINEZ-MORCILLO (Spain) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, I should like to begin by congratulating you very sincerely on the skilful way in which you are presiding over our work, which will, we fervently trust, enable the Conference on Disarmament to embark soon on a more meaningful path. But it would not be proper to omit at this point a reference to the Ambassador of Switzerland, who, with his meticulous and intelligent work, prepared the path along which you have so skilfully continued. Allow me also to associate myself with your words of welcome to the three new ambassadors who have joined us in the work of this Conference on Disarmament today.

My delegation wishes to refer to the statement made on 11 May by the presidency of the European Union with respect to the recent nuclear tests. Within the framework of that statement, and without prejudice to the analysis and examination currently being conducted by the Spanish authorities of the events which have been taking place over recent days, my delegation wishes to place on record the following statement.

(Mr. Martínez-Morcillo, Spain)

Spain deeply regrets the nuclear tests carried out by India on 11 and 13 May. Spain considers that those acts run counter to the moratorium which had prevailed in practice in the international community with respect to nuclear testing. They are contrary to the efforts being made for the establishment of an international organization entrusted with the task of applying the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty, and, lastly, they are contrary to the hard work being done in the field of non-proliferation and disarmament with respect to weapons of mass destruction. Spain urges India to accede to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and to become a party to the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty. It appeals to the countries of South Asia not to allow themselves to slide down the dangerous slope of an arms race which could have destabilizing effects extending beyond the immediate region.

Lastly, and since we hope that during today's plenary meeting it will be possible to agree to appointments and decisions that will enable the Conference on Disarmament to embark on a more fruitful phase, the Spanish delegation would also like to hope that there will be the requisite support for this Conference on Disarmament to begin as soon as possible negotiations for the conclusion of a treaty on the cessation of the production of fissile material.

Mr. NARAY (Hungary): Mr. President, since it is the first time that my delegation takes the floor under your presidency, allow me to congratulate you on the assumption of this high post and the adoption of the work programme, a result of your strenuous efforts and able guidance. Please rest assured of my delegation's full support and cooperation. I also wish to welcome our new colleagues from the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation and Turkey who have recently joined the work in the CD.

I have asked the floor to inform the Conference of a statement issued by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Hungary on 13 May, in connection with the nuclear tests carried out by India. The statement reads as follows:

> "The Hungarian Government has learnt with regret of the nuclear tests by India and fully agrees with the statement of the presidency of the European Union issued on 12 May this year.
>
> "The Hungarian Government is fully committed to the complete implementation of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty, which aim at preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The Hungarian Government has an interest in maintaining peace and stability in South Asia, and expresses its concern about the risk of nuclear and missile proliferation.
>
> "Hungary plans to ratify the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty in the near future. According to Hungary's position, the nuclear tests by India do not promote the earliest possible entering into force of the Treaty, and the realization of its goals and provisions.

(Mr. Náray, Hungary)

"As Hungary is an associate member of the European Union, the Hungarian Government will consult with the presidency of the European Union and the member States of the EU on the current situation and possible further steps."

Mr. SIDOROV (Russian Federation) (translated from Russian): First of all, Mr. President, I would like to say that I am pleased to welcome you to the post of President of the Conference on Disarmament. I would like to wish you success and express the hope that under your guidance the Conference will be able to make progress in drawing up important decisions for international security and peace. I would also like to thank you and the colleagues for the kind words addressed to me. For my part I would like to express my profound satisfaction at the fact that I will now be working with highly skilled and experienced diplomats. I can assure you, Sir, and all my colleagues that as the Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the Conference on Disarmament, I shall do my utmost to ensure success in the work of the CD in the field of multilateral disarmament.

In connection with the subject being discussed in this plenary meeting of the Conference, I would like to read a statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation on 12 May.

"The news that India conducted tests of three nuclear explosive devices on 11 May was received in Russia with anxiety and concern. This step runs counter to the efforts of the world community to strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regime at the global and regional levels, which is a vital factor for international stability and security. Such actions are inadmissible at a time when a universal moratorium on nuclear testing is being observed. For us as a close friend of India this action evoked the most profound feeling of regret. Such actions on the part of the Indian authorities are pushing the world towards nuclear weapons proliferation and creates significant additional obstacles to further nuclear arms reductions. We express the hope that this policy on the part of India will not lead to a chain reaction in the region of South Asia and beyond. We call upon India to reconsider its present nuclear policy and to accede to the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty, with which mankind is pinning its hopes on a nuclear-free world in the twenty-first century. Russia will continue to do all it possibly can to strengthen the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and prevent its being undermined or eroded."

The two further Indian tests carried out on 13 May merely confirm how well-founded our concerns are.

Mr. LI (China) (translated from Chinese): The Indian Government, ignoring strong international opposition and following its nuclear tests on 11 May brazenly carried out two more tests on 13 May. The Chinese Government is deeply shocked, and expresses its strong condemnation. The Indian Government's action flies in the face of the international community's common desire for a total prohibition of nuclear tests, and strikes a heavy

(Mr. Li, China)

blow at international efforts to halt the proliferation of nuclear weapons. It is a serious challenge to the entire international community and will have grave consequences for the South Asian region and for world peace and stability. The international community must take a united stand and demand that India immediately stop its development of nuclear weapons.

Defying world opinion, the Indian Government has undermined global efforts to ban nuclear testing in an attempt to seek hegemony in South Asia and has started a nuclear arms race there. Yet it misrepresents China as posing a nuclear threat to India. This is an out and out lie, intended to justify India's attempt to acquire nuclear weapons. China has always pursued a policy of good-neighbourliness and strives to develop friendly, cooperative relations with all neighbouring countries, including India, on the basis of the five principles of peaceful coexistence.

Since the day it came into possession of nuclear weapons, China has called for their complete prohibition and total destruction; it has undertaken unilaterally and unconditionally not to use or threaten to use nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon States or nuclear-weapon-free zones.

The Chinese Government strongly calls upon the Indian Government to change course - to conduct no more nuclear tests, and do nothing that might make the situation worse. China will follow the development of events with close attention.

My statement today basically reflects the statement just issued by the Foreign Ministry of the People's Republic of China. For reasons of time, we are unable to provide an English text. My delegation will submit the statement later and ask for it to be circulated as an official document of the CD.

Mr. SINCLAIR (Canada): It is with deep regret that we take the floor today to express our concern with India's actions in carrying out a series of nuclear weapons text explosions. The Canadian Prime Minister, the Right Honourable Jean Chrétien, speaking on 13 May, in response to the second set of Indian nuclear tests, condemned the Indian action.

The Prime Minister said that Canada is shocked and disappointed at India's action, which could set off a nuclear arms race on the Indian subcontinent and lead other countries to develop and test nuclear weapons. He said that Canada's relations with India have been placed on hold and announced a series of measures that Canada will implement immediately, including ordering home to Ottawa Canada's High Commissioner as a sign of protest. He added that further measures will be announced following consultations with our friends and allies.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs, the Hon. Lloyd Axworthy, speaking from London on 11 May, following the first series of nuclear tests, said: "We are deeply concerned and very disappointed with India's decision to carry out these nuclear tests. This incident is contrary to international norms established by the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Comprehensive

(Mr. Sinclair, Canada)

Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty. These tests could have grave implications for global non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament, as well as for regional security. We urge India to renounce its nuclear weapons programme and to sign the NPT and the CTBT." The Minister also urged restraint by countries in the region.

Mr. SELEBI (South Africa): Mr. President, I have asked for the floor this morning to speak on a matter that is facing all of us. Before going into this, I do want to congratulate you and assure your of our trust and confidence and that we would support all of your endeavours to make us realize our objectives. I do want also to welcome all of our new colleagues.

It is our position that non-proliferation and the universality of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, as well as the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty, are the flip side of the nuclear disarmament coin. While this position cannot be seen as an excuse for the steps which have been taken by India over the last few days, or for the continued maintenance of a nuclear weapons option, South Africa would also want to see at this point an unambiguous commitment to nuclear disarmament and to the ultimate elimination of nuclear weapons by all States. South Africa, through its own actions, is destroying its nuclear weapons capability, and by working actively for the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and of other weapons of mass destruction, as well as their delivery systems, has clearly demonstrated that this is the only way in which we can comprehensively address these issues.

South Africa renews its call for the full commitment of all States maintaining the nuclear weapons option to nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. We call on you, Mr. President, to actively pursue the consultations on nuclear disarmament which have been mandated to you by the Conference on Disarmament and to seek the implementation of the proposals which have been made this year on this issue. It is only by actively pursuing nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation equally that we will ensure that the world will no longer face the spectre of a nuclear holocaust generated by the renewed pursuit of a nuclear arms race which we had all believed was a thing of the past and no longer threatened mankind as we prepared to enter the new millennium.

The Department of Foreign Affairs in Pretoria issued the following statement on 13 May 1998, on behalf of the South African Government: "The South African Government is deeply concerned at the further two nuclear tests conducted by India on 13 May 1998 and regrets this development. As a matter of principle, South Africa opposes all nuclear tests since they do not contribute to promoting world peace and security. South Africa believes that security is provided by nuclear disarmament rather than by nuclear proliferation, and South Africa repeats the hope that these tests do not result in an arms race in South Asia."

Ms. ANDERSON (Ireland): Mr. President, let me first congratulate you on your assumption of office and wish you well in your work.

I wish to make a brief statement on the subject which has dominated our discussion this morning.

(Ms. Anderson, Ireland)

We of course associate ourselves with the European Union statement earlier reported by the British Ambassador.

The Government of Ireland has expressed its profound dismay at the five nuclear explosions carried out by the Indian authorities this week. The Government's views were conveyed directly by the Minister for Foreign Affairs when he summoned the Chargé D'Affaires of India to the Department of Foreign Affairs yesterday. The Minister spoke of the contempt for world public opinion which these explosions demonstrated.

The Irish authorities are acutely conscious that the emergence of another nuclear-weapon State would represent a most serious setback to the prospects of achieving a world free of nuclear weapons.

We recall Indian leadership over the years in the Non-Aligned Movement and in efforts to advance nuclear disarmament.

The assumptions on the basis of which the non-nuclear-weapon States including Ireland and India had pursued nuclear disarmament over the past 50 years have been shattered by these nuclear test explosions and the declared approach to nuclear weapons and their delivery vehicles announced by the Indian Prime Minister on Monday.

As an important global player, India has a special responsibility to the international community. As a regional Power, it has a specific responsibility for the reduction of tension in the region of South Asia. This week's developments run directly counter to these responsibilities.

The Irish Government strongly urges India, taking account of world public opinion and the enormous concern which its actions have caused, to fundamentally reconsider its position.

For its part, Ireland will continue to insist on the implementation by the declared nuclear-weapon States of their legally binding obligations to eliminate their nuclear weapons arsenals so as to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons at the earliest possible date. In his statement yesterday, our Minister for Foreign Affairs emphasized that Ireland will redouble its efforts in this regard.

Mr. CHOWDHURY (Bangladesh): Mr. President, your diligent labours are obviously producing results. We would encourage you to continue your efforts.

We add our voice to welcoming new colleagues from Turkey, the Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation.

Our focus today, quite appropriately, is on the recent events in South Asia, their political fall-out.

Bangladesh is a regional country. We cannot be faulted therefore for being concerned.

(Mr. Chowdhury, Bangladesh)

We wish to take advantage of our close friendship with all countries of the region to urge calm.

It is our hope that all countries in the neighbourhood will refrain from undertaking nuclear weaponization programmes. In our view, such programmes tend only to lower the level of our sense of security, rather than raise them. They contribute to the spiralling of the arms race, which is destabilizing, and which, as all the world knows, can have horrendous consequences. It is particularly sad when this negative competition could take place between peoples who share a rich and ancient cultural heritage that does them proud.

All of us would do well to remember that it is more heroic to resist temptations than to yield to them. There are moments in history, points in time in the unfolding of crises, when it is better to tarry and reflect than to rush in and regret. Surely such restraint would merit recognition, and praise.

We the Bangladesh are committed, morally and legally, to the non-proliferation regime. Our adherence to the NPT and CTBT reflect this. We have joined these treaties, not because we with to be seen as standing on moral high ground, but because we see our own national self-interest, and the welfare of our common man, and women, being actually served by such commitment on our part.

We would invite all countries to follow suit.

The portals of the NPT club continue to remain open. Similarly, the door of the CTBT is also ajar.

It is logical to assume that the option exercised by a preponderant majority of the world's countries, of their own volition, cannot be wrong.

The means that we in Bangladesh have chosen to elevate our national prestige is to bring the fruits of development to our people.

Our strength, and our reward, have been the show of solidarity we have experienced from the international community.

Perhaps the progress of humankind from the neolithic to the nuclear age was a mark of our knowledge and our skills. The passage from the nuclear to the truly non-proliferation age will symbolize our elevation to a higher plane of civilization.

Mr. SUNGAR (Turkey): Mr. President, I thank you very much for your words of welcome. I also wish to thank those representatives who made a reference to my presence in the Conference for the first time. It will be a pleasure for me to work with you and the members of the secretariat closely in the coming weeks.

(Mr. Sungar, Turkey)

The reason I asked to take the floor today is to bring to your kind attention the official statement issued yesterday by the Minister of Foreign Affairs in Ankara.

The statement read as follows:

"Nuclear tests which threaten and endanger regional stability and security also cause severe damage to environment and public health, which would affect future generations as well. Turkey, which was among the first signatories of the CTBT, has lent its continuous support to international efforts to stop the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. It therefore considers nuclear tests conducted by India as a regrettable development.

"Turkey is opposed to all nuclear tests which in many ways threaten the future of mankind and hopes that such tests would not have an adverse effect on the ongoing international efforts in the field of nuclear disarmament."

Mr. BALBONI ACQUA (Italy) (translated from French): Since I am taking the floor for the first time under your leadership, Sir, allow me to extend to you my congratulations and those of the Italian delegation on taking the Chair. I would like to say how much we have appreciated your work and the noteworthy contributions you have made to the work of the Conference. We are at the start of the second part of the session and we hope that it will be possible to make further progress in our work thanks to the great personal and professional skills you have displayed during your term of office. I would also like to echo the words of welcome to the new ambassadors from the Russian Federation, the Republic of Korea and Turkey. Finally, I take this opportunity to express to your predecessor, the Ambassador of Switzerland, our warmest thanks for the valuable efforts which marked his presidency and were extremely useful.

The Italian delegation shares and fully supports the reasoning behind and the content of the statement made by Ambassador Soutar, whose country, the United Kingdom, currently occupies the presidency of the European Union. It wishes to emphasize the following points.

Italy is greatly disappointed at the three underground nuclear tests carried out last Monday in India. After the serious blow of this news, the Italian Government expressed its concern at behaviour which runs counter to the efforts of the international community to strengthen non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. Given such a regrettable act, all parties need to display a sense of responsibility and restraint and must support the resolve of the international community to achieve the objectives contained in the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty, which has already been signed by 149 countries and is on the way to ratification. We call upon the Government of India to reconsider its position and to accede as soon as possible to the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty. We strongly reaffirm that appeal having learnt of the latest nuclear tests carried out on 13 May.

Mr. COUNDOUREAS (Greece): First of all, let me clarify that my Ambassador, Mr. Karaitidis, was unable to attend this important session. Because of that, I would like to say a few words on his behalf and on behalf, of course, of the Greek Government.

Mr. President, as I take the floor for the first time, allow me to express our sincere and warm wishes for a very successful second part of this year's CD session under your wise and experienced leadership.

Greece, by its traditional position on the important issue of the weapons of mass destruction, fully supports the elimination of these weapons through responsible and structured negotiations and effective and global implementation of the relevant international treaties. Greece has signed the CTBT for two main reasons: firstly, because we consider this treaty as a firm step towards the elimination of nuclear weapons and consolidation of peace and security in the world, and secondly, because we believe that nuclear testing constitutes a major threat to the environment and to public health. We also fully support the universality and strengthening of the NPT regime for the same reasons. In this framework, we express our deep concern over the nuclear testing conducted by India this week. Such a development can create new tensions in the region and destroy the spirit of non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction characterizing our world. We therefore urge the Indian Government to put a definite end to its nuclear testing and to sign and ratify the CTBT with a view to implementing it fully, thus contributing to the consolidation of confidence and stability in South Asia.

Finally, I wish to underline Greece's opposition to any further nuclear tests either in the South Asian region or in any other part of the world.

Mr. KHORRAM (Islamic Republic of Iran): May I welcome our new colleagues, namely the ambassadors of Turkey, the Russian Federation and the Republic of Korea, and wish them all success?

Recent developments have once again brought into focus the need for serious and effective measures to be adopted in order to achieve resolute and verifiable nuclear disarmament, which continues to be the primary objective of this body.

The Islamic Republic of Iran, along with the overwhelming majority of members of the international community, have always insisted on this urgent imperative. Yet, regrettably, a handful of nuclear-weapon States have persistently inhibited any movement towards the realization of nuclear disarmament. Last year the CD was taken hostage to this unhealthy attitude.

The reluctance of these countries to work together with the rest of the international community for the eradicat'on of these inhuman weapons was also abundantly clear during the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference, the CTBT negotiations and final adoption, and the recently concluded second preparatory meeting for the 2000 NPT Review Conference. Recent developments have shown beyond any doubt that this policy must be reversed.

(Mr. Khorram, Islamic Republic of Iran)

The Islamic Republic of Iran has always believed that despite their serious shortcomings, the NPT and CTBT constitute valuable international instruments which could contribute to the realization of our common objective, nuclear disarmament. Hence our commitment to these and other instruments.

In this context, we cannot but express our serious concern over the recent nuclear explosions by India. These tests cannot help the general objective which we are convinced is also shared by India. We regret that these nuclear explosions further undermine the international non-proliferation and test ban regimes and provide a pretext for further intransigence and procrastination in the universal drive for nuclear disarmament.

It is important to underline the need - past and present - to avoid any escalation of tension in the fragile region of South Asia. This calls for the utmost restraint on the part of all. Redoubling our efforts in the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones in South Asia and the Middle East is one appropriate method of moving forward.

Lastly, as I have already pointed out, this should strengthen our resolve to address the fundamental problems. This incident should not be used by nuclear-weapon States to advance irrelevant ulterior motives.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ CEDEÑO (Venezuela) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, allow me first of all to express our satisfaction at seeing you presiding over our work, which I am sure will prove successful. Please count on our support and cooperation in that respect.

My delegation, while endorsing the statement made by the distinguished Ambassador of Mexico, in which he referred to the statement adopted yesterday, in Panama City, by the Rio group, wishes to express its great frustration and concern at the carrying out of nuclear tests in the world, which not only affects international peace and security but also health and the environment.

The quest for security through the development of nuclear weapons undoubtedly has an opposite effect which results in insecurity and instability, not only regionally but worldwide. The harm caused by the carrying out of such activities cannot be described as simply transboundary in nature, but affects the international community as a whole with a major impact on the consideration of the issue and the formulation of the international law that governs these matters.

There can be no doubt as to the universal nature of the international instruments associated with non-proliferation and the prohibition of nuclear testing, just as there can be no doubt as to the establishment of legal norms with roots in customary law which should also be norms of public international law of a binding nature. There is not only an obligation to refrain from activities of this kind and an obligation not to cause harm as a result of activities carried out from the territory of a State, but also an obligation not to provide cooperation and technical assistance. Without an assurance that such activities will not be carried out.

(Mr. Rodríguez Cedeño, Venezuela)

We are faced with a new opportunity to initiate rapidly effective negotiations on nuclear disarmament within the Conference. As we said last March, there is not only an obligation to negotiate, which would be a rule of behaviour, but also an obligation to achieve speedy and effective results on an issue of such significance as nuclear disarmament in terms of its scope and nature.

Mr. RIVASSEAU (France) (translated from French): Mr. President, I thank you for the way in which you are presiding over our work, and I bid welcome to our new colleagues.

On the announcement of the first Indian nuclear test, France's reaction was expressed in the following communiqué:

> "France recalls its attachment to the cause of disarmament and non-proliferation, and to the improvement of security and stability in South Asia. In this context it voices its concern and calls on all States in the region to show restraint.
>
> "The practical application of the declarations made by the Indian Government concerning its participation in negotiations on a treaty to halt the production of fissile material for nuclear-weapon purposes and its attitude to the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty will be the subject of close scrutiny on our part. France calls on India to accede to the treaty."

Since then India has carried out further nuclear tests. These developments, which are deeply regrettable, lead this delegation to insist, now, in this forum, that India should unambiguously announce that it definitively renounces nuclear testing, that it will sign the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty without conditions and without delay, that it will participate in a constructive spirit, as the Permanent Representative of Austria has called on it to do, in the "cut-off" negotiations, and that it will play a full part in international efforts intended to stop the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Mr. GREY (United States of America): Mr. President, I would like to join with you and others in welcoming our three new colleagues to the Conference.

I also would like to address the serious international security situation created by India's series of nuclear-weapons tests. In this regard, I deplore the fact that we were unable to hold a special plenary meeting on 13 May to discuss this matter on an urgent basis. This sets a negative precedent and further erodes the CD's ability to function credibly as an effective multilateral disarmament forum.

I would like to read for the record a White House transcript of President Clinton's remarks at a press conference on 12 May concerning the Indian tests:

(Mr. Grey, United States)

"I want to make it very, very clear that I am deeply disturbed by the nuclear tests which India has conducted, and I do not believe it contributes to building a safer twenty-first century. The United States strongly opposes any new nuclear testing. This action by India not only threatens the stability of the region, it directly challenges the firm international consensus to stop the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. I call on India to announce that it will conduct no further tests, and that it will sign the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty now and without conditions. I also urge India's neighbours not to follow suit - not to follow down the path of a dangerous arms race. As most of you know, our laws have very stringent provisions, signed into law by me in 1994, in response to nuclear tests by non-nuclear-weapons States. And I intend to implement them fully."

On 13 May, the day following these remarks, the Press Secretary of the White House issued the following statement:

"On Wednesday, 13 May 1998, the President reported to Congress that he had imposed sanctions on India as a consequence of that country's 11 May nuclear test explosion. These sanctions were required by section 102 of the Arms Export Control Act, otherwise known as the Glenn Amendment. The sanctions imposed are as follows:

"- Termination of assistance under the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, except for humanitarian assistance for food or other agricultural commodities;

"- Termination of sales of defence articles, defence services, or design and construction services under the Arms Export Control Act, and termination of licences for the export of any item on the United States munitions list;

"- Termination of all foreign military financing under the Arms Export Control Act;

"- Denial of any credit, credit guarantees, or other financial assistance by any department, agency, or instrumentality of the United States Government;

"- The United States opposition to the extension of any loan for financial or technical assistance by any international financial institution;

"- Prohibiting United States banks from making any loan or providing any credit to the Government of India, except for the purpose of purchasing food or other agricultural commodities; and

"- Prohibiting export of specific goods and technology subject to export licensing by the Commerce Department."

(Mr. Grey, United States)

"Finally, the Secretary of State is making a similar determination under section 2 (b)(4) of the Export-Import Bank Act of 1945; thereafter, the Board of Directors of the Export-Import Bank may not give approval to guarantee, insure, or extend credit, or participate in the extension of credit in support of United States exports to India."

As these statements and actions make clear, the United States strongly deplores the nuclear-weapons tests which India has just conducted. And, as we are now hearing, the international community is virtually unanimous in condemning them as well. India's tests are particularly deplorable in an era when the international community has taken significant steps to reduce the dangers posed by nuclear arms, including the successful negotiation in this body of the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty and the decision by the parties to extend indefinitely the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. For this reason, we call on India to join efforts to strengthen the international regime against the proliferation of nuclear weapons, including fissile material cut-off treaty negotiations, the CTBT and the NPT itself.

India's nuclear-weapon tests flout the international norm against nuclear test explosions which is embodied in the CTBT, now signed by 149 countries. These tests raise the risk of further nuclear and missile proliferation in South Asia. I am sure everyone there agrees that an escalating arms race in South Asia is contrary to the interests of all of us. That is why President Clinton urged "India's neighbours not to follow suit - not to follow down the path of a dangerous arms race". That is also why the United States and many other countries have taken such strong action in response to India's nuclear-weapon tests.

The meeting was suspended at 1 p.m. and resumed at 3.15 p.m.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): The 792nd plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament is resumed. The first speaker on my list this afternoon is the representative of Finland, Ambassador Reimaa.

Mr. REIMAA (Finland): I have asked for the floor to inform you of the statement made yesterday, 13 May, in Helsinki by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland, Ms. Tarja Halonen, on the Indian nuclear-weapon tests. The statement reads as follows:

"I am shocked to hear that India has conducted two further nuclear-weapon test explosions.

"Only two days ago India conducted three nuclear test explosions. At that point I viewed that as a deeply regrettable step. All States should commit themselves to the nuclear test ban. In their common statement, the EU member States expressed their concern over the proliferation of nuclear weapons in South Asia.

(Mr. Reimaa, Finland)

"India continued test explosions despite protests. Finland deeply regrets this decision by India. These tests are weakening regional stability and are a blow against the international non-proliferation regime.

"Together with the international community, Finland urges India to announce now that no more explosions will take place and India would join the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty.

"I also appeal to other countries in the region to exercise utmost restraint in their reactions to India's test explosions in order to prevent a regional arms race.

"The Ambassador of India in Helsinki has been called into the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to receive the views of Finland on the matter."

Let me conclude by expressing my warm welcome to our new colleagues who have recently joined the Conference, and wish you, Mr. President, continued success in your efforts to bring our work forward.

Mrs. KRASNOHORSKA (Slovakia) (translated from French): Since I am taking the floor for the first time under your presidency, Sir, allow me to congratulate you on taking over this important function and to extend my wishes for success. I would also like to echo the words of welcome to our new colleagues. Allow me to inform the Conference on Disarmament that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Slovakia issued the following statement today on the nuclear tests carried out by India on 11 and 13 May.

(continued in English)

"The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic noted with regret the information on a series of nuclear tests carried out by India. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic is of the conviction that the performance of the nuclear tests does not contribute to the promotion of an atmosphere of confidence and stability in the region.

"The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic agrees with the content of the European Union presidency statement dated 12 May 1998. Being aware of the global danger of nuclear weapons proliferation, the Slovak Republic supported and welcomed the results of the NPT Review and Extension Conference, and particularly indefinite extension of the NPT. The Slovak Republic ratified the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty on 3 March 1998.

"As one of the 44 countries whose ratification is necessary for the entry into force of the treaty, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic expresses its concern about the eventual consequences of the step taken by India in a wider geopolitical context and considers this step as an obstruction to the efforts of the

(Mrs. Krasnohorská, Slovakia)

international community in the process of nuclear disarmament. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic will carefully monitor developments in the region and will coordinate its steps with partners from European Union and associated countries."

Mr. JAZRI (Malaysia): Mr. President, as this is the first time that I am taking the floor, please accept my delegation's warm wishes to you and, through you, to all member and observer delegations of the Conference on Disarmament. My delegation is confident that under your able leadership, the Conference will begin to engage in substantive work at the very beginning of this second part of the 1998 CD session. My delegation would also like to express its appreciation and admiration of the exemplary manner your predecessor, Ambassador Hofer of Switzerland, showed in contributing towards the adoption of the Conference's 1998 programme of work. My delegation welcomes the important decision taken to begin work in the CD.

I am taking the floor today to bring to the attention of the Conference the press statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia, in Kuala Lumpur, following the series of underground tests conducted by India this week. The press statement reads as follows:

"Malaysia deplores the underground nuclear tests conducted by India on 11 May 1988. The action by India is a serious setback to keeping the region free of nuclear weapons and undermines the efforts of the international community towards attaining a complete ban on nuclear testing. Malaysia is particularly disappointed that India has taken such a step in the light of the overwhelming adoption of the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT).

"Malaysia calls on India to cease developing its capability to produce nuclear weapons immediately. Malaysia further urges all countries in the region to exercise maximum restraint and refrain from action that could further heighten tension in the region. It is hoped that all countries would actively participate in international efforts aimed at achieving a world free of nuclear weapons.

"Malaysia underlines the importance of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons in achieving the universal goal of general and complete disarmament and enhancement of peace and stability. Malaysia reiterates its strong opposition to nuclear testing and the continued possession of weapons of mass destruction. Malaysia further underlines the need for nuclear-weapons States to demonstrate stronger commitment to the goals of nuclear disarmament and the ultimate elimination of these weapons through a programmed reduction and elimination of their nuclear arsenals."

Mr. ACUÑA (Chile) (translated from Spanish): My delegation would like to begin by expressing its complete support for the statement read to us this morning by the distinguished Ambassador of Mexico on behalf of the Rio Group. On behalf of my delegation I would also like to inform the Conference on

(Mr. Acuña, Chile)

Disarmament of the text of a statement which was issued by the Chilean Government concerning the nuclear tests carried out by India this week.

> "The Government of Chile expresses its most forceful rejection of the recent nuclear explosions carried out by the Government of India. These constitute an unnecessary threat to international peace and security, since in today's world they are completely without justification. In addition, they seriously harm the process of entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty, to which the majority of the international community stands committed. Furthermore, in carrying out those tests, India, as a founding member of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, is breaching the agreements reached at the eleventh summit meeting of heads of State and Government of the Movement held in Cartagena, Colombia, which are intended to promote nuclear disarmament. The Government of Chile is steadfast in its policy of rejection of nuclear explosions as well as any acts which run counter to the collective efforts of the international community to eliminate nuclear arsenals."

Mr. GRECU (Romania): Mr. President, since it is the first time that I take the floor under your presidency, let me congratulate you on your assumption of this important office, as well as your already outstanding achievements in terms of starting concrete work within the Conference.

I would now like to present briefly my delegation's views concerning the underground nuclear tests recently conducted by India. Like other countries, Romania regrets all the actions taken by the Indian authorities which run counter to the de facto worldwide observed moratorium on underground nuclear testing, and the principles enshrined in the global non-proliferation norm and the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty. Those tests may also prove to be a real danger for peace and security in South Asia and worldwide.

Romania strongly supports the goals of the CTBT, a treaty that has been negotiated within our Conference, and cannot overemphasize the importance it has with regard to the promotion of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, of peace and stability at regional and global levels.

We appeal to India to join the NPT and CTBT at the earliest possible time. My country would like to see the CTBT rapidly enter into force, and its norm of universal value and magnitude observed by all States.

Mr. PA□ (Poland) My Ambassador has been taken up by unexpected business, and therefore I shall read out his statement in his name.

Mr. President, please accept the Polish delegation's sincere congratulations on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament. We are gratified by your skilful stewardship and the success it has made possible for the CD to reach with regard to the programme of work. I should also like to associate my delegation with the expressions of welcome which have been extended to the distinguished representatives of the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation and Turkey.

(Mr. Pa[illegible], Poland)

In connection with the underground nuclear test explosions which India carried out on 11 and then again on 13 May, I should like to place on record Poland's regrets and concern over the action that clearly runs counter to the aspirations of the international community - aspirations for peace, international security and steady progress in the field of the nuclear arms race, nuclear arms control and disarmament. In this connection, I should like to read out a statement by the Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs, which reads as follows:

> "Poland has been gravely disappointed by the resumption by India, after 24 years, of a programme of underground nuclear tests. The decision of the Government of India to go ahead with nuclear testing runs counter to the efforts of the international community in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation and is contrary to the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty. We see that decision as totally incompatible with the spirit of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and a step that may halt the process of ratification and delay the entry into force of the CTBT of 1996. This situation may in effect complicate efforts to commence multilateral negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty. Poland is gravely concerned over the negative consequences of the nuclear tests for security in South Asia arising from the possible reaction of neighbouring countries, as well as the prospect of an escalation of a nuclear arms race and the means of delivery of nuclear weapons. We are consequently worried that this situation may pose a threat to global peace and security as well. Out of a sense of co-responsibility for international peace and security, Poland urges the Government of India to refrain from further nuclear weapons tests and to accede to the CTBT without any conditions."

I should like to request that the above statement be circulated as an official document of the Conference on Disarmament.

In conclusion, let me stress that Poland fully aligns itself with the statement made by the United Kingdom this morning on behalf of the European Union.

Mr. CHANG (Republic of Korea): Let me first express my warmest congratulations, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference. I can assure you of my delegation's fullest cooperation. I also wish to thank you and the representatives for the warm welcome extended to me.

I would like to associate myself with the previous speakers who expressed deep regret and grave concern at the nuclear tests carried out by India on 11 and 13 May. In this regard, I would like to refer to the statement made by our Foreign Ministry on 12 May which underscores, among others, that the nuclear tests conducted by India are deeply regrettable when international efforts to realize a nuclear-test-free world have been strengthened following the CTBT's adoption, with overwhelming support, in September 1996. We call upon India to refrain from nuclear testing and to take an active part in the global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament effort.

Mr. BENITEZ (Argentina) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, allow me first of all to congratulate you on your performance in the Chair of this Conference and to assure you of the wholehearted support and cooperation of my delegation in your work. I would also like to convey our congratulations to the previous Presidents of this body, Ambassador Hofer of Switzerland and Ambassador Norberg of Sweden. I would also like to extend a warm welcome to the ambassadors of the Russian Federation, the Republic of Korea and Turkey, who have not come to this chamber on the happiest of days, but certainly an unforgettable one.

On Tuesday 12 May our Government issued the following press release:

> "The Government of the Republic of Argentina deplores the conduct of a series of nuclear explosions (fission and thermonuclear) carried out by India on 11 May. Argentina, together with the vast majority of the international community, has signed the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), the purpose of which is to put an end to this kind of explosion and promote the subsequent elimination of nuclear weapons. These tests carried out by India are not in accordance with that objective. We therefore urge the friendly Republic of India to join in the international consensus supporting the CTBT and to proceed to its prompt ratification, thereby displaying its commitment to non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament."

Argentina is a member of the Rio Group and consequently we can endorse the communication on this subject by the Rio Group's Permanent Mechanism for Consultation which Ambassador de Icaza, who spoke before me, presented and circulated in this room. Moreover, we cannot but associate ourselves with the appeal made to all the countries in the region to exercise the utmost restraint in their reactions to this situation.

Mr. CASTRO GUERRERO (Colombia) (translated from Spanish): Colombia, as the Rio Group, to which it belongs, has stated, deeply regrets the carrying out of nuclear tests in any part of the world, such as those carried out in recent days by India. Colombia considers that tests of this type worsen the atmosphere necessary to achieve a world free from the nuclear threat and have a negative impact on regional peace, international security, the environment and human health.

On this occasion the Colombian Government is duty-bound to deplore the fact that the nuclear-weapon States have failed to take sufficient steps or to display a real commitment with the ultimate purpose of achieving within the near future a world free of nuclear weapons. In this vein, Colombia endorses the appeals by the international community for a prompt start to effective negotiations for general, comprehensive and complete nuclear disarmament. In this context, my delegation firmly supports the proposal reiterated this morning by the ambassador of Mexico for the immediate establishment of an ad hoc committee on item 1 on the agenda of the Conference on Disarmament, "Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament".

(Mr. Castro Guerrero, Colombia)

Lastly, my delegation associates itself with the words of welcome expressed to the ambassadors of the Republic of Korea, the Russian Federation and Turkey on the commencement of their work in the Conference on Disarmament, and wishes you, Mr. President, every success in this meeting which has rightly attracted the greatest interest on the part of all the peoples of the world.

Mr. ANDREEV (Bulgaria): It is with deep regret that we are taking the floor today, the regret stemming from the fact that a friendly country like India has conducted a series of underground nuclear tests. At the outset, I would like to underline that Bulgaria, as an associate member of the European Union, aligns itself with the contents of the common position expressed by the presidency of the Union on 12 May.

When signing the CTBT in September 1996, Bulgaria, as a matter of principle, believed - and still is of the opinion - that this Treaty would become a major impediment to the development of new generations of nuclear weapons, and at the same time that it would perform an equally vital non-proliferation function by inhibiting nuclear weapons development by potential new nuclear-weapon States, including undeclared nuclear-weapon States and nuclear threshold States. We consider the Treaty, among other things, as a psychologically important step for moving ahead towards the elimination of nuclear weapons. It was natural to expect that the very appearance of the Treaty, its philosophical concept and goals - even while not acceptable to all countries in all its aspects - would at least prevent the world from any such testing in the future, and that those States would observe the moratorium the Treaty imposed. Unfortunately, recent developments have proved that our hopes were wrong. We do not believe that the new tests have established the most secure environment in the region and in the world - nor, indeed, that they have provided an assurance to the people of India that their real national interests would be better protected. We regret those actions and we want to believe that the dominant trends in international security endeavours will be directed at achieving peace, sustainable development for all the peoples of the world. We hope that India will be with those States which would continue the true processes of strengthening nuclear disarmament through the further enhancement of the international regime against the proliferation of nuclear weapons, including negotiations on a fissile material cut-off and accession to the CTBT and the NPT itself.

Mr. BOLD (Mongolia): Mr. President, I welcome you on the assumption of the presidency in this second part of the CD session, and bid also welcome to our new colleagues from Turkey, the Russian Federation and the Republic of Korea.

Mongolia also joins the international community's opposition and non-acceptance of the series of nuclear tests conducted by India. I asked for the floor to place on the record the statement made earlier this morning by the Foreign Minister of Mongolia. The following statement was made in connection with the underground nuclear tests conducted by India on 11 and 13 May: "Mongolia has always considered a comprehensive nuclear test ban to be of monumental importance in promoting nuclear disarmament, and in line with this spirit, it signed and ratified the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban

(Mr. Bold, Mongolia)

Treaty. Mongolia deeply regrets that India has conducted nuclear tests at a time when the process of accession to this Treaty by the countries of the world is gaining momentum and when all five nuclear Powers refrain from any nuclear testing."

Mongolia appeals to the friendly country of India to accede to the NPT and the CTBT at the earliest possible date.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): I thank the distinguished representative of Mongolia for his statement. Mongolia was the last speaker on my list. Are there any further requests for the floor? This does not seem to be the case. We have therefore concluded our debate for today.

As I indicated at the beginning of this plenary meeting, I should now like to proceed to the appointment of officers to fill the posts established in decision CD/1501 adopted by the Conference on 26 March 1998. The consultations that I have undertaken in this regard indicate that the Conference is now ready to appoint Ambassador Antonio de Icaza of Mexico as Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on negative security assurances, Ambassador John Campbell of Australia as Special Coordinator on APLs, Ambassador Palihakkara of Sri Lanka as Special Coordinator on prevention of an arms race in outer space, Mr. Pavel Grecu of Romania as Special Coordinator on transparency in armaments, Ambassador Javier Illanes of Chile as Special Coordinator on improved and effective functioning of the Conference, Ambassador Péter Náray of Hungary as Special Coordinator on the review of the agenda of the Conference and Ambassador Erwin Hofer of Switzerland as Special Coordinator on expansion of the membership of the Conference. May I take it that the Conference agrees to these appointments?

It was so decided.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): I should like to extend our sincere congratulations to Ambassador Antonio de Icaza of Mexico, Ambassador John Campbell of Australia, Ambassador Palihakkara of Sri Lanka, Mr. Pavel Grecu of Romania, Ambassador Javier Illanes of Chile, Ambassador Péter Náray of Hungary and Ambassador Erwin Hofer of Switzerland on their appointments. I wish them every success in their important responsibilities and urge them to embark on their tasks as early as possible. In this connection, I would like to draw your attention to paragraph 7 of decision CD/1501, in which the Conference requested the presidency and the Special Coordinators on APLs, prevention of an arms race in outer space and transparency in armaments to present early and regular reports on the outcome of their consultations throughout the session, including before the end of the second part of its 1998 session. With respect to paragraph 1 of decision CD/1501, I should like to inform the Conference that it is my intention, with the assistance of the outgoing and incoming Presidents, to initiate immediately following this plenary meeting the process of intensive consultations and seek the views of the members of the Conference on

(The President)

appropriate methods and approaches for dealing with agenda item 1, entitled "cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament", taking into consideration all proposals and views on this item.

This concludes our business for today. Does any delegation wish to take the floor at this stage? This does not seem to be the case. In view of the fact that Thursday 21 May 1998 is an official holiday in Geneva and that the Palais des Nations will be closed, and after consultation with the Coordinators of the Groups, the next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Tuesday 19 May 1998 at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 4 p.m.

CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

CD/PV.793
19 May 1998

ENGLISH

FINAL RECORD OF THE SEVEN HUNDRED AND NINETY-THIRD PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 19 May 1998, at 10.15 a.m.

President: Mr. Al-Hussami (Syrian Arab Republic)

GE.98-61842 (E)

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): I declare open the 793rd plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

I should like at the outset to extend on behalf of all of us a warm welcome to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan, H.E. Mr. K. Tokaev, who will address the Conference this morning. The members of the Conference will recall that three years ago we were privileged to receive H.E. the President of Kazakhstan in this very council chamber. The presence of the Minister for Foreign Affairs among us today testifies to the continued interest attached by his Government to our work. I am sure his statement will be followed with interest. Besides the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan, I have on my list of speakers for this morning the representatives of Algeria, Finland and the Czech Republic as well as France. I now invite the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan, H.E. Mr. K. Tokaev, to address the Conference.

Mr. TOKAEV (Kazakhstan): Mr. President, first of all, allow me to congratulate you on the occasion of your accession to the post of President of the Conference on Disarmament and to thank you for your extremely efficient leadership over this outstanding forum. I also extend my gratitude to your predecessor, the Ambassador of Switzerland, Mr. Erwin Hofer, for his efforts to re-energize our Conference in the important tasks it faces. Let me also sincerely thank the Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament, Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, and his deputy, Mr. Abdelkader Bensmail, for their assistance and contribution to the work of the Conference.

The Conference on Disarmament is a unique multilateral forum which has proved in practice its efficiency in terms of conduct of negotiations on the most acute disarmament issues. The range of issues discussed within the framework of the Conference encompasses all spheres related to the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and conventional arms control.

Kazakhstan gives its due to the outstanding success of the Conference in drafting such documents as the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). This convincingly demonstrates the huge potential of the Conference and its constructive and effective impact on disarmament processes.

Kazakhstan is devoted to the strengthening of international security, the development of cooperation among States and the enhancement of the role of international organizations in the settlement of global problems and conflicts. Proceeding from these fundamental goals, Kazakhstan makes every effort to achieve progress in the disarmament process. We consider that the observer status received by Kazakhstan in 1996 was an adequate response from the international community to our country's actions in the disarmament process. We are deeply grateful to the Conference for the proper evaluation of the activity of our country in the process of elimination of the nuclear threat.

(Mr. Tokaev, Kazakhstan)

Having signed the CTBT, Kazakhstan thereby stated its desire to work towards the strengthening of a nuclear test control regime. Modernization of the seismic station of Makanchi, listed in the first tier of the Global Monitoring System, will be launched this year. In September, in Kurchatov, there will be an international conference on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, devoted to the tenth anniversary of the first joint experiment on nuclear test control. Russian, American and Kazakh specialists and experts, as well as representatives of international organizations, will take part in the Conference. During the Conference, it is planned to conduct a demonstration for explosion calibration purposes at the former Semipalatinsk test site.

The post-confrontational development gives an additional impetus to multilateral negotiations with the aim of achieving specific solutions in the field of international security, arms limitation and disarmament. The priority attached to the need for nuclear disarmament is confirmed by annual resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly. However, without taking real steps in this area, we will never be able to reach our goal. We should bear in mind that nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation issues are intertwined and international security can be achieved only through the concerted action of nuclear and non-nuclear-weapon States (NNWS). In this context, we support the importance of bilateral and multilateral discussion of the problems related to the elimination of nuclear weapons.

On 13 May, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan made an official statement concerning nuclear tests in India. As a State which, by its own will, abandoned its nuclear heritage and firmly devoted itself to the non-proliferation regime, Kazakhstan cannot but state its deep concern over the fact that the development of nuclear weapons in India endangers the intention of the international community to make progress on nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. Moreover, nuclear tests in India have had a negative impact on the development of the situation in the region. Unfortunately, we face a real threat of escalation in the nuclear arms race.

On the threshold of the next century, the world community has collided with the threat of proliferation of nuclear weapons. With much regret, it must be stated that a new century will not be more secure, rather that it will be less secure compared to the twentieth century. But interminable pessimism should not hang over the world community like Damocles' sword. Concrete actions are needed to neutralize the nuclear threat.

We believe that the Conference on Disarmament, without delay, already this year should initiate negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty which will make a significant contribution to the NPT on the eve of the Review Conference which will take place in the year 2000. It is desirable to have all States possessing fissile material involved in negotiations on a cut-off treaty.

As far as Kazakhstan is concerned it has made, and will continue to make, its own contribution to the non-proliferation of nuclear materials and technologies. The proof of that was the shipment of 600 kilograms of highly enriched uranium in 1994 to the United States under IAEA safeguards. My

(Mr. Tokaev, Kazakhstan)

country is ready to join the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG). It should be noted that since 1997, Kazakhstan has been abiding by the NSG's governing principles in its export of nuclear materials and technologies.

Kazakhstan expresses its strong interest in joining the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR). Kazakhstan, possessing considerable scientific and technological potential in the missile industry, and having a space centre on its territory, can make a significant contribution to this regime and promote cooperation in the area of the peaceful use of missile technologies.

Provision of security assurances to the NNWS remains the focus of discussions at the Conference. NNWS have advanced a fair demand, believing that by renouncing the possession of nuclear weapons by meeting their obligation under article II of the NPT, they have a right to receive firm, legally binding, so-called "negative" security assurances. We believe that one of the ways to solve this issue is to adopt a protocol on security assurances which will be part and parcel of the NPT. It should be noted that the formulation of the obligation not to use nuclear weapons against NNWS parties to the Treaty must be straightforward and unequivocal.

With the radical reduction of nuclear weapons, a thorough elaboration of the issues, concerning the place and role of conventional armed forces and arms in preserving peace and strategic balance acquires an important role.

A substantial part of the strategic balance mechanism is its multilateral nature, i.e. focused and concerted multilateral actions and cooperation. Kazakhstan believes that the process of radical reduction of conventional arms should have a regional as well as global character which, upon its implementation, would be equal to the movement towards universal and total disarmament.

Aimed at setting up an effective mechanism for discussions and consultations on the most pressing current security issues in Asia, the President of Kazakhstan, N. Nazarbaev, has put forward an initiative to convene a Conference on security-building measures in Asia. This idea was wholeheartedly supported by most regional States.

Kazakhstan reiterates its position to curb international arms trade. It is currently the most acute problem. While weapons are not the original cause of the conflicts per se, they act as powerful means to fan conflicts. All current regional conflicts prove this argument. We are convinced that the main task in this direction is to establish an international mechanism which will tackle this issue. The Register of Conventional Arms, which includes data on export-import of weapons, national production and State policy in this field, can serve as a basis for this mechanism. No doubt such transparency is required to prevent the destabilizing stockpiling of weapons in any region or excess accumulation of weapons in any State.

The nuclear disarmament process is of a multilateral nature and it is hard to accept that many States who have undertaken obligations under the NPT are prevented from direct participation in discussions of nuclear disarmament

(Mr. Tokaev, Kazakhstan)

problems within the framework of the Conference. Taking into consideration the universal nature of the issues being discussed, universal membership is strongly needed. This concept has been reaffirmed by the context of disarmament negotiations. Criteria for acceptance of new members were discussed in 1997 and we think that the membership of the Conference should be opened to any new State which effectively contributes to the disarmament process. I believe that Kazakhstan has the right to become a full-fledged member of the Conference on Disarmament.

Mr. DEMBRI (Algeria)(translated from French): Mr. President, allow me to begin by congratulating you very warmly on taking the Chair of the Conference on Disarmament and express our satisfaction at the way you are conducting our proceedings, after the outstanding work of your predecessor in this post, the Ambassador of Switzerland. It is a matter of great satisfaction to see in you Syria, a brother country and friend, presiding over our work. We appreciate the fact that His Excellency Mr. Tokaev, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan, has honoured our current session with his presence, and we should like to echo your thanks to him. I also wish to take this opportunity to welcome our new colleagues, the ambassadors of Russia, Turkey and the Republic of Korea.

My delegation has already spoken at the start of the session and conveyed its assessment, its conclusions and its priorities on all matters concerning our work. Today, now that we have established an ad hoc committee on negative security assurances as well as a set of mechanisms for consultation, including one entrusting the President with an identical mission with respect to nuclear disarmament, my delegation would like to share a number of conclusions and a number of concerns it feels with respect to a number of developments linked to the carrying out of nuclear tests in South Asia. While emphasizing its devotion to the spirit and the letter of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty, my delegation wishes to emphasize with great seriousness that the outcome of the second session of the Preparatory Committee for the NPT Review Conference, held recently in Geneva, as well as the recent information on nuclear tests conducted in South Asia, referred to above, lead us to wonder about the real extent of non-proliferation achievements and about the willingness of all of us here to address nuclear disarmament as a task flowing from the individual and collective responsibility of States, of all States. Nuclear disarmament is now a matter of paramount political priority for all which must guarantee the integrity of all the processes leading to it and fundamental security needs for the non-nuclear-weapon States.

As my country has always underscored, it is an undeniable fact which we have not yet established in practice that non-proliferation is a sine qua non and a precondition for disarmament. In order for disarmament to be preserved and consolidated, it must be supported and reinvigorated, if it is not to be called into question, by serious and meaningful disarmament measures. Indeed, the interaction between these two dimensions is manifest: non-proliferation permits disarmament, and disarmament preserves and can consolidates it. What

(Mr. Dembri, Algeria)

has just occurred in South Asia - and this is a lesson which must be drawn - makes clear the urgent need to proceed to collective substantive work on nuclear disarmament construed as an objective, since it is equally urgent that non-proliferation should be consolidated and strengthened.

In this respect nuclear disarmament remains an inescapable objective, as the international community decided 20 years ago, one which is itself an integral component of general and complete disarmament. There is thus an urgent need, if it is to be achieved for concrete measures geared to a timetable, albeit an indicative one, to be collectively drawn up within the multilateral forum afforded by the Conference on Disarmament. The first of these measures has been identified and acknowledged in principle since 1995: the prohibition of fissile material. However, this measure is not sufficient by itself, as it must from part of a multilateral dynamic encompassing other measures on which our collective thinking must focus and on which we will have to make choices when we have arrived at a common vision of the issues. Furthermore, if the fissile material ban is to be genuinely incorporated into this bidimensional logic of preserving and strengthening non-proliferation and contributing to nuclear disarmament, the negotiations will be really worthwhile only if existing stocks are the subject of focused work within the Conference on Disarmament.

These are the two most urgent tasks which the Conference on Disarmament must undertake with respect to nuclear disarmament if it is to avoid a repetition of events identical to those we have just experienced in South Asia, and in order to complete work already embarked upon by the international community in other forums such as the preparations for the entry into force of the CTBT, which we hope will take place on schedule, the extension of nuclear-weapon-free zones to regions which currently do not benefit from such arrangements, as well as the universal extension to all without exception, and the full implementation by all, also without exception, of the provisions of the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

International relations have frequently gone through periods favourable to progress in nuclear disarmament, whether they be marked by détente or by tension. In periods of détente the evaluation is more dispassionate and action more considered. In times of tension, action is more prompt and the results therefore more decisive. That is why we must reject inactivity. And we must also emphasize the twofold responsibility of all States, and firstly that of the nuclear-weapon States, an individual responsibility, given the obligations stemming from the treaties to which they are parties, and a collective responsibility, given the ambition of the international community to construct a world which is totally free from nuclear weapons.

Mr. President, we hope that the consultations which you are responsible for conducting on item 1 on our agenda will lead to concrete results. We set great store by that work and would like to believe that all delegations, inspired by the hopes and the questions inherent in this undertaking of disarmament, can work together, subject to the necessary balances, to reach consensus decisions that will ensure that essential interaction between non-proliferation and disarmament.

Mr. REIMAA (Finland): Mr. President, I would like to congratulate you for the target-oriented way you have conducted our work as the President of the Conference on Disarmament and have led the Conference to take the decision of 26 March on the programme of work. I would also like to thank your predecessors, Ambassador Norberg of Sweden and Ambassador Hofer of Switzerland, for their crucial contribution to our work.

In this connection I would also like to extend my congratulations to Ambassador de Icaza for his appointment as Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on NSAs, to Ambassador Palihakkara, Ambassador Campbell, Minister Counsellor Grecu, Ambassador Naray, Ambassador Hofer and Ambassador Illanes for their appointments as Special Coordinators. I assure them the full cooperation of the delegation of Finland in their demanding tasks.

After the appointment of our colleagues for the various tasks set out in the March decision, we look forward to a productive CD session. However, there is no time to waste. The March decision is a challenging one and it is our common goal to get, as soon as possible, practical results which would guide the work of the Conference on Disarmament for this year and further.

According to the March decision the President of the Conference shall pursue intensive consultations and seek the views of its members on appropriate methods and approaches for dealing with agenda item 1, "Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament". Mr. President we welcome your announcement last week that you would initiate your consultations on this subject immediately. In this context all proposals and views need to be taken into consideration. South Africa and Belgium have made proposals relating to consultation mechanisms. At some stage those proposals could help us to come to an organization understanding on how we could develop the consultations further.

As we have stated previously, Finland places special importance on starting negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty, as proposed in February by Austria. We consider cut-off as the indispensable next step forward in the process of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We hope that the CD will be able to establish an ad hoc committee for the FMCT on the basis of the agreed mandate.

We welcome the decision to establish in the CD an ad hoc committee under agenda item 4, entitled "Effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons". We are glad that Ambassador de Icaza of Mexico has taken this complex issue in his experienced hands.

The establishment of the first ad hoc committee in the CD since the conclusion of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty is significant as such. We hope that the Ad Hoc Committee on NSAs building on its past work and subsequent developments, will be able to take concrete positive steps towards global, legally binding arrangements. We emphasize the decision made by the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference on adherence to the NPT as a non-nuclear-weapon State as a prerequisite for NSAs.

(Mr. Reimaa, Finland)

In 1994 the Ad Hoc Committee on Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS) came close to an agreement on starting negotiations on confidence-building measures. PAROS is an item which deals with preventive measures. It is of importance because there is no multilateral agreement banning the deployment of weapons other than weapons of mass destruction in outer space. It is our view that we should look at the material produced by the Ad Hoc Committee a few years ago. It seems to us that confidence-building and transparency measures could be appropriate steps to start with on this item.

Finland welcomes the decision to appoint Ambassador Campbell of Australia to resume his task as a Special Coordinator for anti-personnel landmines. Recognizing the importance of the Ottawa Convention, we continue to believe that the CD can make a contribution to the solution of the global APL problem. It is my understanding that many countries that have joined the Ottawa convention agree now that the CD can do useful work, especially by negotiating a ban on transfers of APLs. It is important to seize the momentum now. We are confident that the Special Coordinator will do his utmost in order to present a mandate which would enable the ad hoc committee to start negotiations as soon as possible.

"Transparency in armaments" is an item that we traditionally consider as a conventional item. We believe that openness in armaments can promote mutual confidence and thus strengthen international security and stability. The CD work on this issue is closely linked to the strengthening of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. We hope that the consultation process by the Special Coordinator will raise interest and support for the United Nations Register and that the CD may be able to come up with some ideas that could be used by the United Nations Expert Group in this matter or even do some complementary work in the area of transparency.

In addition to the above-mentioned substantive items, we are pleased at the reappointment of the Special Coordinator of the review of the CD agenda, the expansion of membership and improved and effective functioning. The review of the agenda, membership and working methods of the CD and their adjustment to today's needs are in line with the efforts being made in the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly and in the United Nations Disarmament Commission.

To conclude the decision adopted by the Conference on 26 March is broad and challenging. The President of the Conference, the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee and the Special Coordinators all have demanding tasks ahead in identifying which items are ready for fruitful negotiations now and which may require further preparatory work. The cooperation and flexibility of all delegations are needed for a successful outcome.

Mr. SVOBODA (Czech Republic): Mr. President, as it is the first time my delegation takes the floor under your presidency, I would like to congratulate you on the assumption of this significant post, and to express our support and appreciation of your work.

(Mr. Svoboda, Czech Republic)

Allow me to refer again to the debate which took place at the last meeting and to inform you and the CD plenary that the Minster for Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic has also released a statement on the first series of Indian nuclear tests on 11 May 1998. I quote: "The Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic has received with concern and disappointment the news about the Indian nuclear tests carried out on 11 May 1998. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic fully supports the process of relaxation of tension in the world and in this particular region, identifying itself with the conclusion of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test-Ban Treaty and believing that this step by India goes against the spirit of international treaties aimed at the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and a comprehensive ban on nuclear testing. The position of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic was presented on 13 May 1998 to the Indian Ambassador in Prague during his call on the Director-General of the political Section of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs".

I am sure that at least the same extent of concern relates to the other two tests of last Wednesday, and I wish on behalf of the Czech delegation to join the relevant statement of the European Union presidency presented here by the distinguished representative of the United Kingdom.

Mrs. BOURGOIS (France) (translated from French): Mr. President, we meet today for the last time under your authority. My delegation would like to congratulate you on the achievements you are able to cite at the end of your term. You have managed to put our Conference back to work. We now have to draw maximum benefit from this result in order to meet the expectations the international community places in our forum and contribute, as far as we are able, to take up the challenges with which we are suddenly faced. The Conference must make this contribution in two fields, that of reflection and that of action.

For 20 years France has consistently upheld an approach based on certain essential principles. The first is that disarmament is a universal right, equal for all and enshrined by the Charter of the United Nations. To be realistic, we must move forward in stages. The second is that disarmament is a matter for all. And when we say all, we really mean all, that is, the whole international community, represented here in the shape of member States and observer States which can and must participate fully in our deliberations in a manner commensurate with their interest in the subjects we are addressing. The third idea, finally, is that the global approach to disarmament must take account of particular regional situations. Analysis of the threats to security in one part of the world or another as perceived by the States in question, is necessary in order to decide on the most effective measures and to reach the consensus which is essential for their implementation.

The circumstances are particularly appropriate for the application of these ideas today. I shall not revert to the recent developments which are on all our minds. France's position on this subject was expressed last week. But in this context where peace could appear to be under threat in one part of the world and where strategic stability is affected, I should like to stress the importance of the consultations which have begun, under your authority, and with the help of the outgoing and incoming Presidents, on the fundamental

(Mrs. Bourgois, France)

issue of nuclear disarmament. On 26 February of this year I stated that my delegation was ready to discuss all issues related to nuclear disarmament before the Conference, in the most transparent possible manner. We are all the more prepared to do so now that the need appears even more pressing. It is true that the discussions now starting do not fit into the context of the mythical ad hoc committee on nuclear disarmament so ardently sought by some. But for all those who are more interested in the result than in the formal framework, it is clear that the format agreed to discuss nuclear disarmament here, thanks to you and to your predecessors, Mr. President, will permit a discussion which is complete sustained and free of concessions. It must be able to meet the needs of each of those involved for dialogue, until such time as, having agreed on specific action to be taken, we can commit ourselves to actual negotiations by setting up the appropriate ad hoc committee. This action alone would reflect awareness within this body of the changing realities around it. It would also signify the creation of a forum for dialogue which can contribute to lowering tensions.

My country intends to contribute to consideration of nuclear disarmament in a constructive manner. Since the day when, on 13 June 1995, the President of the Republic announced simultaneously the temporary resumption of French nuclear tests and the decision to sign the CTBT, France has been proud of the progress it has made in this field. Allow me to illustrate my remarks by reminding you of the President of the Republic's decision to dismantle our land-based component in February 1996. The related aspects of this decision-redeployment of units, transfer and safe management of fissile material, but also aid for regions affected by these decisions and conversion of several military sites - will give rise to further heavy financial costs for several years. The principle of sufficiency which governs our deterrent has had the result of limiting to four the number of our missile-launching nuclear submarines. It is perhaps not without value to recall that France has no tactical weapons.

With regard to de-targeting and downgrading of the state of alert, developments here should also be emphasized. On 26 September 1997, France announced that following the dismantling of the surface-to-surface missiles deployed on the Plateau d'Albion, none of the nuclear components of the French deterrent force were targeted. Finally, the levels of alert of the air and submarine forces were downgraded in the light of the new strategic context. As a total, the French military budget now represents only 3 per cent of gross domestic product instead of 3.5 per cent in 1990. The share of this budget devoted to the nuclear force is now only 10 per cent instead of 17 per cent in 1990. This means that this share has fallen even more rapidly than France's military budget - halving of nuclear appropriations since 1990 despite the additional costs of all kinds caused by arms reductions. This shows that the adjustments linked to the new international environment have taken the form of concrete and measurable decisions.

With regard to the production of fissile material, the halting of the production of plutonium for explosive military uses in 1992 and the production of highly enriched uranium in 1996 is well known. It is true that other nuclear Powers have announced a halt to their production. But in this field

(Mrs. Bourgois, France)

France has taken the risk of dismantling the corresponding installations. The operations for a total close-down are beginning in 1998 at the two sites of Marcoule and Pierrelatte.

This means two things. On the one hand, even if a sudden shift in the international situation and the attitude of certain key players might render it necessary, the production of these materials could not physically be resumed at those sites. Meanwhile, in the absence of certainty as to the behaviour of others, and while the threshold States are developing their capabilities in this field, the financial sacrifice which has been made is enormous because the cost of dismantling and site clearance amounts to several dozens of billions of francs.

Everyone remembers the name of Mururoa. The Pacific test site is now closed. In a few days IAEA will present a report on whether these tests had a harmful effect on the environment and health of the region's population, as a last stage in the process of closing the site. All this shows that the precise and formal commitments entered into in 1996 by the head of State, and translated into legal terms by the signature of the CTBT in September 1996 and its ratification early last month have been complied with in good faith. The speed of the process shows how seriously we are complying with our commitments. Indeed, we have gone further. I would like to emphasize the exceptional nature of our action, which is once again shown by its irreversible nature. The installations specifically designed for testing have been dismantled and all the dismantling operations at Mururoa and Fangataufa should be completed by the summer of 1998.

Ultimately, the judgement which may be made depends on the point of view of the observer. There is still much to be done in order to bring about the total elimination of nuclear arsenals. On the other hand, the distance already covered in the space of a few years by a country such as France is considerable, and the efforts required to translate the decisions taken fully into facts will continue for a long time to come. Given the level of strict sufficiency of its arsenal, France's effort in terms of nuclear disarmament is proportionately second to none.

This effort must be continued in the multilateral area. The initiation of negotiations on a treaty to prohibit the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other explosive nuclear devices, the "cut-off", is essential. Allow me to recapitulate the substance of this issue. It is not the direct purpose of the "cut-off", any more than it is that of the CTBT, a treaty which France and Great Britain were the first nuclear-weapon States to ratify, on 6 April, to reduce existing arsenals; the "cut-off", the CTBT and global nuclear reductions are three distinct but complementary objectives. However, just as the comprehensive nuclear test ban put an end to the development of new, sophisticated generations of nuclear weapons and curbed their qualitative improvement, a ban on the production of fissile material will limit the quantities of material which could be used in such weapons. The combination of these two bans will facilitate further reductions in nuclear weapons as a whole, beyond the bilateral negotiations and efforts made on a unilateral basis by countries such as France.

(Mrs. Bourgois, France)

Conversely, if States which have the capacity to do so can continue to develop new sophisticated generations of nuclear weapons or to produce new quantities of fissile material for such weapons, the overall reduction in the number of operational weapons will quickly reach its limits and will be reversible at any time as a result of developments in the international strategic context or a national context. Hence these two treaties are essential in order to contain the nuclear build-up and proliferation in all its forms. The "cut-off" also has a unique dimension because it relates to fissile material, that is, the very core of any weapon or explosive device. That is why controls over nuclear materials were put in place as soon as the NPT entered into force in 1970 at the heart of the IAEA safeguards regime. Since then, the diffusion of knowledge and the liberalization of trade have developed in such a way that making it impossible to obtain military-grade fissile material has become the ultimate obstacle to the manufacture of explosive nuclear devices by States or non-State groups. At the same time, the risk of illicit trafficking in nuclear materials has grown, partly as a result of the end of the nuclear arms race and the accompanying measures to effect an overall reduction in these nuclear weapons.

A universal halt to the production of materials for explosive nuclear purposes and the verification of such halt are therefore necessary for regional and international peace and security.

A treaty to prohibit the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons would comprise a uniform commitment by all States parties and would thus be a non-discriminatory instrument: the ban on the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons which is already contained in the commitments made by non-nuclear-weapon States when they became party to the NPT would be extended to other States. This would also mean the establishment of a universal and effective verification regime, in accordance with the Shannon mandate. This regime would result in the implementation of safeguards at all installations in the world which produce fissile material for nuclear weapons. The universal implementation of this ban and its strict verification will maximize the effectiveness of the non-proliferation regime.

For three years my country together with others has been calling for the immediate initiation and rapid conclusion of negotiations on such a universal and non-discriminatory treaty, on the basis of the Shannon report and the mandate included in it. France supports Austria's initiative, which, following the Federal Republic of Germany last year, proposed such a decision this year. We are convinced that this decision can be taken rapidly and that it must be taken with the participation of all States whose absence would make an agreement to ban fissile material for nuclear weapons practically meaningless. Such negotiations can and must begin without delay and without preconditions of any kind. We are all aware that the combination of the Shannon report and mandate offer everyone an opportunity to raise all issues in the manner that each deems most appropriate. I am aware that recent developments in a region of the world which I mentioned earlier may make it more easy for some and more difficult for others to accept the launching of such negotiations. It is not France's intention - quite the contrary - to ask those who feel threatened today to make a supplementary effort. But it is France's hope that on the eve of such long, such difficult and such crucial

(Mrs. Bourgois, France)

negotiations as those on the "cut-off", everyone appreciates that an agreement of principle on the initiation of such negotiations would constitute a confidence-building measure, taken on the basis of the sovereign equality of States, which would reduce tensions and relaunch a process of normalization in the region in question. That is in everyone's interest.

I emphasize - today we have the duty to begin these "cut-off" negotiations, without waiting any longer and without any sort of preconditions. We place our trust in you, Mr. President, to hold consultations as soon as possible on this fundamental issue and to put before us promptly a favourable consensus decision on Austria's proposal and the establishment of an ad hoc committee on the prohibition of fissile material.

Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan): I have been asked to request the floor this morning to draw attention to the further developments that have taken place and are taking place at this time in the dangerous situation that has arisen following India's five nuclear-weapons tests last week. My Government wishes to draw attention to the series of statements that have emanated from the highest levels of the Indian leadership on this issue.

Firstly, India's leaders have stated that they have "a big bomb" and that its command and control is in place. Therefore, it is clear that India has already weaponized its nuclear weapons capability. Secondly, the Indian leadership has further stated that India is a nuclear-weapon State. We would welcome a response from this Conference, and particularly from the major sponsors of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, as to this declaration. Thirdly, India has stated that it will continue subcritical testing for nuclear weapons and refine designs, regardless of the CTBT. It claims equal rights with the five nuclear-weapon States. We would welcome a response to this assertion as well. Fourthly, the Indian leadership has stated that it is prepared to use nuclear weapons in case of an attack or an aggression. It is clear that this threat is held out in the case of either conventional or non-conventional use of force.

Yesterday the Secretary-General of the ruling party and Home Minister of India, Mr. Lal Krishna Advani, stated: "Islamabad should realize the change in the geo-strategic situation in the region and the world and roll back its anti-India policy, especially with regard to Kashmir. India's bold and decisive step to become a nuclear-weapon State has brought about a qualitative new stage in Indo-Pakistan relations, particularly in finding a solution to the Kashmir problem. It signifies India's resolve to deal firmly and strongly with Pakistan."

This situation, therefore, cumulatively - the testing, the policy declarations and now the threats, which by the way are matched by actual movement on the ground - has created a situation of grave crisis in our region. It is a situation of political, military and indeed nuclear crisis.

Pakistan has been asked to exercise restraint, and I believe that it will be apparent to all, through our responses, our statements and our actions, that we have acted with circumspection and restraint. But we have to respond to the threat which is now posed to our security and indeed to our

(Mr. Akram, Pakistan)

survival, and we must take into account not only our capabilities but also the responses of the international community. I must confess that the Government and people of Pakistan are deeply disappointed by the reactions of the international community to this grave and serious development that has taken place. Today we have seen examples of that pusillanimity. Some of our friends refer to the region in question as if it is some place on the Moon. Some of our friends speak of a test in South Asia. My dear friends, the test took place in India, not in South Asia. Why are our friends afraid even to speak, let alone act?

The Prime Minister of Pakistan has addressed a letter to the leaders of the Group of 8 who were meeting in London, and I would like to quote the text of this letter:

> "The nuclear testing, by India, of a whole range of weaponry, including systems which are Pakistan-specific, has multiplied the immediacy and the magnitude of the threat to our security. Besides fundamentally altering the precarious strategic balance, which contributed to the maintenance of tenuous peace, this Indian action has raised the possibility of aggressive military acts against Pakistan. You would certainly agree that overt weaponization by India is yet another manifestation of the highly irresponsible and reckless actions taken by India to escalate tensions in the region in recent weeks. The BJP Government has already made its aggressive designs against Pakistan a fundamental article of its policy agenda. In recent days it has taken steps to implement its designs, including military action across the Line of Control in Kashmir. In the face of these ominous developments, which pose an immediate threat to our security, we cannot be expected to remain complacent. I had, in April 1998, drawn your attention to the consequences that would ensue from India's induction of nuclear weapons. We are disappointed that our warnings were not heeded. The latest events have proven us completely right. We are once again being asked to exercise restraint at an extremely critical juncture on matters involving national security and survival. I trust that you will recognize and be receptive to Pakistan's legitimate need for self-defence."

I have already requested the secretariat to circulate this letter as an official document.

It is obvious that the security situation in South Asia has changed gravely for the worse, and so has the global situation changed for the worse. Pakistan's Secretary for Foreign Affairs has stated that we have initiated a review of the entire strategic situation. The Indian nuclear explosions, he said, have caused an immediate and direct threat to Pakistan. The balance of power has violently been tilted and nuclear asymmetries exacerbated. But our Prime Minister has added that Pakistan will not act in haste, and that we will choose our own time to respond to the new situation and the new threat that we are facing. What our Prime Minister has added in his conversations with the leaders of two major Powers is that the very essence of the non-proliferation regime has been shattered by India's actions. It is quite clear that non-proliferation as a political and legal norm has been completely torn apart

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by India's actions. The CTBT is now a questionable restraint as far as India is concerned, since it has already tested its weapons, and it can develop, by its own admission, whatever designs that it wishes.

The FMCT is also, in our view, an entirely irrelevant goal at this moment. It will not be responsive to the threat which Pakistan faces. It will not change for the better the erosion of the non-proliferation regime that has taken place. Therefore, we believe that statements such as that we have heard today from our distinguished friend from France and the proposal to set up an ad hoc committee on the so-called "cut-off" treaty are a waste of time. We should focus on the real danger to non-proliferation, not resort to tokenism at this time when my country and the non-proliferation regime, as well as international security, face the gravest threat that we have come across for many decades.

Pakistan will do what it has to do, and we will choose the time to do so. As far as the CD is concerned, we believe that it is obliged at this moment to adopt a strategic pause and to reflect on the situation that the world confronts following India's nuclear tests and its claim to have become a nuclear-weapon State. It is only when viable and effective answers are produced to the questions that have been raised by India's actions that this Conference can once again get back on track and begin to address the new security threat, the new security situation, that has arisen out of this action and build bridges towards restoring international stability and peace and a world in which nuclear weapons are no longer a threat. Today it is not only a particular region, to quote my friend from France, which faces a threat. It is the entire world which faces instability and an erosion of the norms of peace and stability that have guided us for so long.

Mrs. BOURGOIS (France) (translated from French): I think it is my duty to respond to the concern and disappointment expressed by my colleague and friend the Ambassador of Pakistan, insofar as he did not mention the representative of an anonymous region of the world, Europe, but France. I would just like to say this to him: France does not hesitate to name the players or protagonists in any process of destabilization in a region of the world. The statement issued following the meeting of the G-8 in Birmingham unambiguously condemned the Indian tests. Of course we appreciate that our Conference is not in a position, probably because of its very nature, to embark on the resolution of an issue which nevertheless is a matter of concern to all the States members of this Conference. What can the Conference do? Withdraw into a corner and do nothing, as usual? That is not our view. We have a possible decision on a subject which is still relevant in the short and the medium term, and that is why it seems to us, as well as to other delegations which have taken the floor this morning, that the initiation of negotiations on the prohibition of the production of fissile material for military purposes would have two advantages: to provide a response to the situation which we cannot provide, at least here, by other means, and to preserve more than ever the point of contact which exists here in Geneva in the interests of all.

Mr. AKRAM (Pakistan): I am one of those admirers of Cartesian logic, but I must confess that I cannot for the life of me discern that logic in the

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statement of my dear friend Ambassador Bourgois just now: we cannot do anything about India's nuclear tests, so let's do something irrelevant in any case, since it will make us feel good that we can do something. That is not the response of a serious body such as the Conference on Disarmament. That is not the response of a serious Power such as France. We greatly admire France for its boldness, its stand of principle, its defence of freedom. I am afraid we have not seen too much of that in its response to India's test.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): As the term of office of my country, Syria, in the Chair of the Conference on Disarmament comes to an end, I leave this podium with a profound sense of satisfaction with what I have been able to achieve during this short period. The Presidential statement contained in document CD/1500 and the decision contained in document CD/1501 dated 26 March 1998, the provisions of which have been completed through the appointment of the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee and the six Special Coordinators, will give a great impetus to this Conference and will place the Conference once again in a state of preparedness to achieve further progress. Needless to say, this important achievement could not have been made without your cooperation and your desire to facilitate the task of the President. I take this opportunity to address my sincere congratulations to their exellencies who have been selected to chair the Ad Hoc Committee on negative security assurances and to occupy the posts of the six Special Coordinators in view of their high qualifications and extensive experience. I would also like to thank them for having accepted the tasks they have been entrusted with, tasks which no doubt will require them to make various sacrifices, but I am confident that they will gladly make those sacrifices in view of their belief in the noble aims of this Conference.

With regard to the implementation of paragraph 1 of the decision contained in document CD/1501, as I informed you during our last meeting, I have held a meeting with the former President of the Conference and the incoming President of the Conference during which we discussed in a preliminary manner various viewpoints concerning the most appropriate ways to handle the task which the Conference has assigned to us in connection with the item entitled "Cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament". This meeting made it possible to inform the troika of all the specific proposals that had been submitted on the various aspects of agenda item 1 and to examine ways and means to discharge our duties during the coming weeks. I would like to emphasize that I have noted a common resolve to continue monitoring this question carefully and patiently but with determination.

On this occasion, please allow me to draw your attention in particular to the successive disturbing indicators which highlight the dangers inherent in neglecting the current imbalance in controlling the non-proliferation systems and the nuclear test ban. The continued reluctance on the part of the States concerned to honour their commitments will undoubtedly exacerbate that imbalance and lead to grave consequences in more than one region of the world. The Conference on Disarmament is called upon today, more than at any time in the past, to assume its responsibilities in this respect and to move towards the rationalization and activation of its approach to the question of nuclear disarmament and the cessation of the nuclear arms race as quickly as possible before it is too late.

(The President)

Now I would like to welcome His Excellency Mr. Murat Sungar, the recently appointed Ambassador and Permanent Representative of the Republic of Turkey, who is to succeed me in the Chair of the Conference. I wish to congratulate him on his assumption of this post and wish him success in his Presidential tasks. Finally, I wish to extend to all of you and, in particular, the group coordinators, my deep gratitude and appreciation for your kind understanding and your cooperation which was the best encouragement I could have received in discharging my mission. I also wish to express my gratitude and appreciation to His Excellency Mr. Vladimir Petrovsky, the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations in Geneva, for all the valuable advice that he has provided me with and I wish to thank all the members of the secretariat, in particular Mr. Abdelkader Bensmail, the Deputy Secretary-General of the Conference, for helping to facilitate my task. I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation to all the staff of the secretariat, particularly the interpreters, all of whom have made our work not only possible but enjoyable. I thank you all.

Mr. de ICAZA (Mexico) (translated from Spanish): Many thanks, Mr. President, for the message which you have just delivered and which my delegation intends to study with all due care. My delegation considers that today more than ever the Conference on Disarmament cannot indulge itself in the luxury of immobility. I therefore venture to request that at the conclusion of this meeting, and here in the same room, you convene an informal meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee on negative security assurances for an initial exchange of views and the organization of the Committee's work.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): That concludes our business for today. The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 28 May 1998 at 10 a.m.

The meeting rose at 11.45 a.m.